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OR,

The Strange Case of Captain Scudd.

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DARE," "OLD BOMBSHELL," "WILD VUL-
CAN," "THE DIAMOND SPORT," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

MURDER OR—WHAT?

A MAN ran lightly up the steps of a splendid mansion situated in the most aristocratic portion of New York City. The man was plainly dressed and about thirty years of age, although his smooth-shaved, youthful face made him look several years younger. To glance at him

EVERY MAN SEEMED LISTENING WITH HUSHED HEART AND STILLLED BREATH TO THE
WONDERFUL REVELATION OF THE HYPNOTIZED MAN.

casually, one would not have suspected he was one of the most famous "rogue-catchers" unconnected with the regular detective force of Gotham.

Yet such was the case.

Calvin Carter—known to friends and foes as "Clear-Grit Cal"—had made an enviable reputation for himself as an "independent detective." In him were combined skill, courage, shrewdness, perseverance and *honesty*. This latter quality is confessedly something out of the common order of things in private detectives, although there are certainly a few—a very few—honest men who are privates.

But it is really a wonderful thing to find one who is both honest and well up in his business.

Cal did not have to ring at the door of the mansion, although he had put out his hand to do so.

The door was opened, as if his appearance was expected.

Such was really the case.

"Are you the detective?"

"I am."

Then he was ushered into a room where a gray-bearded, dark-clothed man seemed waiting for him.

This man arose.

"You are Calvin Carter?"

"That is my name, sir."

"I am the family physician of the Scudds; my name is Andros."

The detective bowed.

"It is a terrible affair, sir," continued the physician, after acknowledging the bow by one in return. "You may have heard of Captain Scudd?"

"I have."

"At his request, I have made no more investigations than were absolutely necessary, for he wished you to see everything exactly as they were at the time of young Thornton's death. The police have not yet been notified."

"I beg your pardon, sir, but I really know nothing of what has occurred. The messenger requested me to come here without a moment's delay, which I was able to do. No reasons why I should come were given. Will you be kind enough to tell me what has happened?"

At this the doctor seemed very much disturbed. He walked nervously about, rubbing his hands together excitedly, before replying. Suddenly he paused before the detective, saying, with forced deliberation:

"I am not ready to say what has happened, sir, but there is a dead man in Captain John Scudd's room which he uses as a private office."

"Captain Scudd—"

"Is all right."

"Who is the corpse?"

"His nephew."

"Ah!"

Dr. Andros went on swiftly, as if that exclamation had been something like an accusation:

"I do not know what happened in that room, but I wish to say right here that Charley Thornton was highly respected and beloved by his uncle, and Captain Scudd is quite prostrated by the terrible shock."

"How did he die?"

"He has a bullet in his brain!"

Calvin Carter did not betray any surprise at this statement, for he was half-expecting something of the sort.

"Where is Captain Scudd?"

"In his private room. He has a little organic trouble, and I almost fear this affair will prove too much for him. He is quite broken up at present, and he was forced to ask me to meet you and show you everything."

"Then take me to the corpse."

"Come."

The physician led the way from the parlor, and they passed to a room that was something like a combined library and office. It was finely furnished, showing the owner of the mansion had a taste for luxury even in a "den" for his own especial use. There were shelves for books, a table, a desk, chair, etc. Three or four costly paintings hung on the walls. These were all marine views. In one corner hung a cutlass and a brace of old-fashioned pistols. Above the desk was a miniature full-rigged ship, a skillful and dainty piece of work that must have cost many weeks of patient, painstaking labor.

The detective's eyes seemed to take in everything at a glance, and he saw a couch on which lay the figure of a young man in a posture that could not be termed one of repose, for it seemed ready to slip to the floor.

Clear-Grit Cal went directly to the couch and looked into the face of the dead, for the young man had passed into the "Great Unknown."

Despite the position of the body, the face of the young man was in perfect repose and the eyes were almost closed. But for the tiny round hole near the right temple, he might have seemed asleep.

On the floor, about three feet from the couch, lay a handsome revolver.

Carter again looked searchingly about the room before he touched a thing. Dr. Andros stood in the door.

"Has anything been disturbed since the corpse was discovered?" asked the ferret.

"Not to my knowledge," was the reply.

Cal observed the position of the revolver and noted it lay with the muzzle toward the couch. It might have fallen from the hand of the dead and—

No! The right hand of the corpse was partially beneath the body!

The detective scowled a bit as he noted this.

"Come here, doctor."

The physician came to his side.

"You say you did not disturb anything more than was necessary in making your investigations?"

"That is what I said, sir."

"Did you move the body at all?"

"Not in the least."

"This right hand—was it in that position when you first came?"

"It was."

"The bullet seems to have entered at a spot that must have brought death instantly?"

"You are right—it did."

"The young man would not have stirred after the shot was fired?"

"No."

"Not in the least?"

"No more than a tremor."

"He would not have started up and then fallen back in his present position?"

"No, sir."

Cal again looked at the revolver on the floor and surveyed the position of the corpse. Then he knelt and examined the wound.

"The muzzle of the weapon was within six inches of his head when the shot was fired," he said.

The doctor nodded.

"You think it was suicide?"

"I did not say so, sir," the detective replied. "I would like to examine that weapon, but, if it had not been disturbed, I should prefer the coroner to see everything."

"Is there no way this affair can be kept from the newspapers and the public?"

Cal looked at the physician in surprise.

"Is it possible you understand the boasted enterprise of New York newspapers?" he exclaimed.

The doctor winced a little, and the ferret swiftly added:

"Here is a sensation; nothing can keep it from the papers. Why, sir! this may be murder!"

Dr. Andros recoiled.

"Impossible!"

For a moment the detective's eyes were half-closed, and he looked searchingly at the physician; then he deliberately put a question:

"Are you ready to make oath this is suicide?"

The physician drew himself up rather stiffly:

"I am not here to decide that," he said. "I am simply Captain Scudd's private medical attendant. I have ascertained beyond a doubt that the youth is dead, and, as I can be of no aid to a dead man, my service ends. It is for the coroner to say whether this is a case of suicide or not."

"Exactly. And do you think you will find a coroner ready to keep this matter private?"

"Money will do almost anything, and Captain Scudd is a wealthy man."

Cal was silent for a moment, looking straight into the doctor's face, and then he said:

"I should not advise Captain Scudd to attempt to keep this quiet. I know it may hurt his pride to have it made public, but it will look very bad if he tries to cover anything up."

"And he sent for you for the very purpose of investigating this matter quietly?"

"I will do so as quietly as possible, but this story will have to go to the papers. I have not learned any of the particulars, but it strikes me there may be a mystery here."

The doctor was silenced.

Cal drew the physician to a chair.

"How long ago was this young man found?" he asked.

"Not more than an hour."

"Who discovered him?"

The doctor hesitated and couched behind his hand, at the same time looking sharply at Carter from beneath his bushy eyebrows.

"Well, the fact is—ahem!—that the captain—you see he—was—ahem!—Confound it!"

Cal was surprised at the sudden display of nervousness on the part of the physician, and wondered why the man could not come to a point at once. Why should he seem so broken over a simple question?

"The captain was what?"

"He was in this room when the discovery was made."

"Then he discovered the corpse?"

"No."

"No?"

"He did not."

"Then who—"

"Mrs. Scudd."

"The captain's wife?"

"Yes, sir."

"Explain."

"Well, she happened to want to see her husband for something, and she came to the room."

"Yes."

"She rapped on the door."

"Go on."

"The first time she rapped there was no response."

"She repeated the knock?"

"She did."

"And then?"

"Her husband's voice asked who was there."

"He was within the room?"

"Yes, sir."

Detective Carter scowled again, as was his habit when he struck anything a bit puzzling.

"What followed?"

"Mrs. Scudd asked to be admitted. The captain asked her to wait a moment. Pretty soon she heard the key turn in the lock."

Cal bent forward in his chair, his face suddenly becoming very grave.

"She heard the key turn in the lock?" he echoed, plainly surprised at that. "Then the door was locked from the inside?"

Dr. Andros was very pale, for he understood the detective's thoughts, but he was forced to reply:

"It was."

CHAPTER II.

"WHAT THEN—WHAT FOLLOWED?"

"THIS is becoming interesting," declared Calvin Carter. "I thought I scented a mystery. Go on; what followed?"

The physician cleared his throat.

"Captain Scudd opened the door," he said, speaking a bit huskily, "and his wife entered. She noticed Charley Thornton on the couch, and she asked what was the matter with him. The captain seemed surprised, replying that he did not know anything was the matter. He said Charley was not feeling well and had lain down to rest."

The detective was drinking in every word, and he seemed impatient when the doctor paused.

"And then—what?"

"Mrs. Scudd saw the revolver on the floor."

"Ah!"

"She uttered a little cry and pointed toward it. The captain started forward in amazement, staring at it. 'Why, it is a revolver!' he cried. But his wife's eyes had become fixed on Thornton's face. 'He is dead!' she gasped."

The doctor's manner was so realistic that he seemed to paint the whole scene with those few words. He went on:

"It was a terrible discovery. Mrs. Scudd nearly fainted, and the captain could scarcely believe the evidence of his eyes. He was so astounded he could not speak for some time, and then horror overcame him."

"But I cannot understand this," said the ferret, knitting his brows. "He was here in the room with the corpse, you say—locked in?"

"Yes."

"And yet he did not know the young man was dead?"

"No."

"Huah!"

There was something strangely expressive about that exclamation—both amazement and doubt were mingled. The physician hastened to say:

"I know such a thing seems quite impossible, but—but—"

"What?"

"I have the utmost confidence in Captain Scudd."

Carter lifted one hand.

"That may be true, but it will have no bearing on the case."

The doctor arose to his feet, plainly touched to the quick.

"Have you formed an opinion thus soon?" he

asked, somewhat scornfully. "You were summoned for the purpose of investigating this singular and sad affair, and—"

"That is just what I propose to do. I beg you not be offended by anything I may have said. I have formed no opinion, I assure you, for that is not my way. I shall not form an opinion till everything is settled in my mind. Doctor, I must see Captain Scudd."

"At once?"

"At once."

"He is all broken down over this affair, for this young man was a beloved nephew. He was Charles Thornton's guardian."

"Did Thornton have any money?"

"Yes, I believe so."

"And this was in the captain's hands?"

"Yes."

"Was young Thornton steady?"

"I regret to say he was not. He was inclined to be wild, and the captain was obliged to keep a strict hand on him."

Carter arose and took the doctor's arm, then he led the physician to the spot where the revolver lay.

"Please note the position of that weapon very carefully," was his request. "You see it is about three feet from the couch, toward which its muzzle points. This is not of great importance; but I wish to examine the weapon, and the coroner will ask about where it was found, and its position."

He had taken a paper-weight from the desk and, when he lifted the weapon, he placed the weight on the spot where it had lain. Then he took the revolver to a window and critically examined it by the light, muttering aloud:

"Thirty-eight caliber—one chamber discharged—no marks on the weapon to tell owner—self-cocker—Jones & Markham, makers."

Having examined the revolver, to his satisfaction, he returned it to the spot indicated by the paper-weight.

"Have you made a discovery?" anxiously asked the doctor.

"Nothing of especial note," was the reply. "Now I wish to see Captain Scudd."

"I will learn if he is prepared to meet you."

The doctor left the room. While he was gone, Carter busied himself making note of everything. He discovered there was but one way of entering and leaving the room. There were two other doors, but they led to closets.

Captain Scudd had plainly been a sea-captain, and that he had made a comfortable fortune was apparent.

The doctor soon returned with the announcement that the captain was waiting in the parlor to see the detective.

"Be as considerate as you can with your questions," urged the old physician. "He is in a bad way. Do not shock him, I beg of you."

Clear-Grit Cal followed the physician to the parlor, where he found a rather corpulent, square-jawed man of about sixty awaiting him. This gentleman was seated in a comfortable chair, and a man-servant was fanning him. As the physician and the detective entered, Captain Scudd dismissed the servant, who immediately left the room.

"You will pardon me for not rising, sir?" he said, in something like bluff frankness. "I really feel unequal to the exertion. You are Calvin Carter, the detective?"

"I am, sir."

"And the doctor—he has told you—"

"He has told me a great deal. I wish to learn much more."

"I shall be only too glad to give you any information possible. This is a terrible affair—terrible! I do not understand it!—Doctor, did you lock the door of my room?"

"I did, captain."

"That is right. I want no one but yourself and the detective to enter there till the coroner comes."

"Have you sent for the coroner?" asked Cal.

"Not yet, sir—not yet. I wished your advice. I am so torn to pieces! Poor Charley—poor boy! God, sir! I loved that boy! I thought as much of him as if he were my own! Yes, sir, I did! It was not my fault that he was a little wild at times—no, sir! You won't think it was my fault? I did my best by him. He was my younger sister's son—Harriet's boy. I have no sons of my own, sir—no children. I had a boy, but he is over in Greenwood. And now Charley is gone! Poor Charley! It is a hard blow for an old man like me!"

Cal was closely watching the man's face as these words were spoken, trying to read Captain Scudd's character rightly. It was no easy task, for he knew it was not impossible the man was playing the hypocrite; but he was forced to con-

fess he was acting the part skillfully—if it was acting.

The captain fumbled with his hands and produced a handkerchief. The detective thought he was going to wipe his eyes, but he blew his nose instead. If the old salt had wiped his eyes with that handkerchief Cal would have been inclined to believe he was trying to make an impression, but what he did was so in keeping with the character of the man as the detective had sized him up that Carter was favorably impressed.

The physician was a very nervous man. He could not keep still, and his hands were in constant motion. He really annoyed Carter, who tried not to notice his nervousness.

"This is a sad affair, captain," said Cal. "I trust you will be able to give me all the information possible, so I may get at this business quickly."

The old salt straightened up in his chair.

"Go on, sir," he said. "I am ready."

"Well, to begin with, do you think the young man took his own life?"

The captain fell back, his face turning pale.

"I really can't say—I don't know what to think." And then, with a sudden vehemence that startled the detective, he cried:

"Of course he did! What else could have happened? Yes, sir, he took his own life!"

"Then why did you summon me, sir? If you are sure of this, why should you need the service of a detective?"

"It was my wife—Mrs. Scudd thought best that a detective should make investigations."

"And why did you not summon one of the regulars?"

Once more the captain tried to straighten up stiffly.

"You understand, sir, we have a desire to keep this matter private."

"A difficult thing to do."

"You do not think we shall be able to do so?"

"Frankly, I do not."

The captain's face, which had been pale at first, was now flushed crimson, and he mopped it nervously with his handkerchief. Cal Carter was watching and noting every move and every change.

"I am sorry. I suppose it will be in the newspapers. Condemn the newspapers, sir! That is what I say, sir! They ought to be!"

"Some of them had, that is true. You say your nephew was inclined to be wild at times?"

"I regret to confess it, but it is true. Not that he was a bad or vicious boy," he hastily added. "On the contrary, he was always gentle and kind. Even when he had been drinking, he remained a gentleman—he showed his breeding, sir."

"Had he been drinking to-day?"

The captain hesitated, then bowed.

"He had."

"Was he intoxicated?"

"That I cannot say. He did not stagger when he came in, but there was a wild look in his eyes. I asked what was the matter, and he said he did not know. Then I accused him of drinking. He declared he had only taken one glass of beer. Then he lay down on that couch. He said something about being drugged, and—"

The detective started.

"Drugged?"

"Yes."

"What then—what followed?"

A dazed look came over the old captain's face and he moved his hands in an aimless manner.

"What then?" he echoed. "That is what puzzles me. What followed?"

Carter leaned forward in his chair.

"You do not mean to say you cannot tell what followed?" he asked, almost breathlessly.

"That is what I mean," declared Captain Scudd. "Everything seems a blank—I do not remember anything till I heard my wife rapping at the door!"

CHAPTER III.

SINGULAR STATEMENTS.

DETECTIVE CARTER was more than surprised at this statement—he was astounded. He looked at Captain Scudd in wonder, scarcely able to believe the man was in earnest. But evidently the man was never soberer or more in earnest in all his life.

The doctor had paused in his nervous walk and was staring breathlessly at the two men. He seemed to be trying to read the effect of the captain's words on Carter.

"This is a most astonishing statement, captain," said the detective, slowly. "Do you mean to say you remained in the room till your wife came and still know nothing of what occurred?"

"I know it is astonishing," acknowledged the old salt. "It can scarcely be more surprising to you than to me, but it is true—I swear it!"

"You remained in the room?"

"I presume so. I was in the room when Charley came, and I was there when Mrs. Scudd knocked on the door. I have no recollection of leaving that room."

"How much time passed between the moment when your nephew came in and Mrs. Scudd rapped at the door?"

"I do not know, but it only seems a few moments to me. It seems that I had just heard Charley say he was drugged. Barely had the words passed his lips when I heard the knocking at the door."

"You did not immediately answer when she first knocked?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Well, I do not know, sir. I believe I tried to do so, but could not seem to utter a word."

"You had not fallen asleep?"

"It is impossible."

"When your wife called your name you responded?"

"I did."

"And then?"

"I asked what she wanted."

"Her reply?"

"Was that she wanted to see me a moment."

"And next?"

"I called for her to come in; she replied that the door was locked."

"You had locked it?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"Where was the key?"

"In my pocket."

"Then you must have locked it."

"I suppose so," was the helpless reply; "but I have not the least recollection of doing such a thing."

The detective now fully realized that he had struck a case that promised to prove decidedly out of the usual order. He was becoming more and more interested with each passing moment.

Dr. Andros now stood like a statue, staring and listening. He seemed utterly incapable of moving or speaking a word.

"You were forced to unlock the door to admit your wife?"

"Yes, sir."

"She entered the room?"

"She did."

"And then—what?"

"She saw Charley on the couch."

Captain Scudd was breathing heavily, like a man who had over-exerted himself. He looked up at the physician, saying faintly:

"Fan me, doctor."

Dr. Andros hastened to do so.

"Did Mrs. Scudd immediately approach the couch?" Cal asked, after a brief silence.

"Yes, sir."

"But you were the one who discovered the young man was dead?"

"No."

"No?"

"She made that discovery. She pointed to the revolver on the floor, but I looked at Charley's face. 'It is a pistol!' she cried; but I could only gasp: 'He is dead—dead!'"

The old salt was very much overcome by the remembrance, and, behind the captain's chair, Dr. Andros shook his head warningly at Cal.

Although burning with impatience to hear more, the detective held himself in restraint for at least three minutes, making rapid short-hand notes in a little book.

After a while, the captain went on, voluntarily:

"I could scarcely believe my eyes, but I was forced to attend to Mrs. Scudd, who fainted, sir, like a woman, sir. I had sense enough to carry her from the room and lock the door before I summoned any of the servants, so they know nothing of what has happened, though they suspect something is the matter."

"You afterward returned to the room?"

"Yes, sir."

"For what purpose?"

"Well, I could not believe I had not been deceived. I went back to satisfy myself Charley was really there with a bullet-hole in his temple."

"Did you move anything?"

"Nothing."

"You did not touch the body?"

"No, sir."

"Nor the revolver?"

"No."

Cal's face was like a mask, but if Captain Scudd could have read his thoughts, he would have been startled, to say the least.

"Captain, this is a most extraordinary story, to say the least. I beg you to consider carefully every statement you have made, and if there is anything you wish to retract—"

The captain half-started from his chair.

"Gad, sir!" he cried. "Do you think I have lied? I have summoned you to investigate this affair, not to insult me in my own house!"

"I have no thought of insulting you, sir," calmly returned the detective. "When I said those words, I was only thinking of you—of your best interest. Such a story as you have told will have a terrible overhauling by the coroner. You must realize how strange it is—"

"I do, sir, I do! I cannot expect you to understand it, for I do not understand it myself."

"For a time you must have been quite unconscious of anything that occurred?"

"I think I was."

"It is simply wonderful! Have you ever had such spells before?"

Captain Scudd looked puzzled.

"Well, I do not know," he slowly replied; "but I think I have. I have complained to the doctor here that I was getting absent-minded, for there have been times when a whole afternoon has seemed like a minute. I would go in there to my desk and it would seem that barely was I seated before it was night, and still I know I entered the room near midday. Sometimes I wrote letters or did things of which I had not the least recollection afterward."

"Have you proof that you are troubled by such spells?"

"All the proof I have is what I have told Mrs. Scudd and Dr. Andros concerning them."

The detective arose and led the physician aside, begging Captain Scudd's pardon for doing so.

"Doctor," he said, speaking guardedly, so the old salt could not hear, "I have a few questions to ask you."

"Go ahead."

"In the first place, you have utter confidence in Captain Scudd?"

"Implicit, sir."

"He has told you of these spells?"

"He spoke of them once or twice."

"What do you think of them?"

"I have not formed an opinion."

"Well, you must see that this story he tells will be riddled by a coroner's jury. It will not hold water unless it can be proved beyond a doubt that he has these very spells of which he speaks. And then—"

"And then—what, sir?"

"Another question will arise."

"What question?"

"One with regard to his sanity!"

CHAPTER IV.

MRS. SCUDD.

DR. ANDROS started.

"What do you mean?"

"Is Captain Scudd always in his right mind?"

"I have no reason to believe he is not."

"Then he may find himself entangled in a net that will drag him into very deep water. This affair is bound to make a great sensation."

"It cannot be kept quiet?"

Cal shook his head.

"Such a thing is simply impossible."

"I am sorry—for the captain's sake. It will crush him completely, for I suppose all the particulars of his nephew's occasional larks will be prated through the papers."

"Yes; it will be better to try to conceal nothing, for every point will be nosed out. But, worse than everything else, the captain will be suspected of the murder of his nephew."

The doctor groaned.

"That is what I have feared!" he confessed.

"It cannot be avoided. It is not improbable that he will be arrested."

"Arrested?"

"Yes."

"Such a thing must not occur!"

"You must see that the case looks black against him, and it is not improbable that much will be discovered that will make it still blacker."

Dr. Andros was pale and nervous again.

"This is horrible!" he whispered. "Why, the captain loved that young man as if he were his own son!"

"And still he may have killed him."

The physician fell back, staring hard at the detective.

"Sir—"

Cal checked him with a motion.

"Careful, doctor—he will hear you. I do not mean to say the captain would do such a thing while in his right mind, but—"

"What?"

"He may have done so while in a state of mental aberration."

"I will not believe such a thing possible!"

"You may be forced to believe. But I have some more questions to ask the captain."

They returned to the spot where Captain Scudd was sitting.

"Captain," said the detective, "you have spoken of your nephew's occasional wildness. Was he inclined to drink?"

A look of pain settled on the old sailor's face.

"At times, sir, at times. I have often talked with him, and only last evening I warned him against the pace he was inclined to travel."

"Had he other follies?"

"He was inclined to let his fancy run away with him in one other respect."

"What was that?"

"He fancied ballet-dancers."

"Ah! Anything more?"

"He bet on the races."

"Was inclined to gamble a little, eh?"

"Yes, sir. But I do not see how this can concern the case at all."

"And still it may be of great importance. The future will reveal whether it is or not. How did your nephew reach the house to-day? Did he walk or come in a carriage?"

"I have not inquired."

"Will the butler know?"

"It is quite probable."

"Then I will question him later. Do you own a revolver?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where is it?"

"In the desk of my room—the room where poor Charley is."

"You are sure it is still in your desk?"

"I presume it is."

"Doctor, will you kindly ascertain if the weapon is there?"

Dr. Andros bowed and left the room. In a few moments he returned, saying the desk was locked. Captain Scudd gave him the key, and he went back to the room. His face looked grave when he re-entered the parlor.

"There is no revolver there," he declared.

"Not there?" exclaimed the captain. "Well, that is most singular. Are you sure? Did you look carefully, doctor?"

"I did. It is not there."

Again the old salt blew his nose vigorously.

"I wonder what in the world can have become of it!" he cried. "I always leave it there."

"Was it marked with your name or initials?" asked Cal.

"No, sir; it was not marked in any way."

"The weapon on the floor—that was not yours?"

Captain Scudd looked startled, but instantly replied:

"No, sir; it was not."

Cal made some more notes, and then he said:

"Captain, I would like to see your wife."

"I am afraid that will be impossible at present, sir," was the reply. "She is completely broken down by this affair."

"If it is possible, I hope she will give me a few minutes."

"Well, sir, I will see."

The captain arose and slowly left the room. The detective and the doctor looked into each other's eyes.

"What do you make of it?" questioned the physician.

"Nothing yet."

"Do you think you will be able to get at the exact truth?"

"I think so. I am not in the habit of failing in anything I undertake. I have a motto, sir. It is 'Never Say Die.' For that reason I am sometimes called the 'Never-Say-Die Detective.' If I am given full swing on this case, I will get at the bottom facts or go out of the business."

Dr. Andros bowed with satisfaction.

"That is the kind of talk I like to hear, and I believe you will succeed."

"Was Thornton an only child?"

"He was the only child of the captain's sister, but Harriet Scudd married a man who had a tiny daughter living. Bartley Thornton was a widower, and I believe the young man's half-sister is somewhere in the city. Her name is Ollie. She is about three years older than Charley."

"How old was he?"

"In his nineteenth year, I think."

"He looked older."

"Yes, he looked twenty-one, at least."

At this moment the captain returned, saying his wife would be down in a short time.

The detective then engaged him in conver-

sation of a nature that had little or no bearing on the case, watching his face and trying to "sound" him.

After a little, Carter asked to be left alone with Mrs. Scudder when she came in.

The captain and the doctor retired from the room, leaving the ferret to make some more notes in his little book and run swiftly over the case in his mind.

"This promises to be a case worth working," he softly muttered. "It is not every day I strike something out of the usual, and surely this is not common. At present, there seems but one explanation, and that is that Captain Scudd has fits of temporary insanity. In one of those spells he may have killed his nephew, who was sleeping on that cot, all unaware of any danger. If this is not the true explanation, I am ready to give no solution at present."

He waited impatiently for Mrs. Scudd to appear. She was a long time coming, and Carter felt that every moment might be precious.

"She is probably a woman of fifty," thought Cal; "and, as the captain explains, this has completely upset her. Well, this may be but the beginning. She may have many trials to go through before she is given rest."

The portieres parted and a woman stepped into the room. The detective instantly arose and bowed, finding himself confronted by a vision of female loveliness—a beautiful woman who was certainly less than thirty years of age. She was a brunette with flashing eyes and red lips, while her figure was supple, graceful and round. She was plump and delicious as a ripe peach, but there was not one ounce too much flesh on her. Calvin Carter was actually startled by this vision of beauty, and he stammered in his surprise. A musical voice asked:

"Did you send for me?"

"If you are Mrs. Scudd, I did, madam."

"I am Mrs. Scudd," was her assurance, as she advanced.

CHAPTER V.

NO LIGHT ON THE MYSTERY.

THE lady was plainly nervous and excited. She paused beside a chair, resting one hand on the back. Detective Carter saw the hand tremble as she lifted it. In her other hand she held a handkerchief tightly grasped.

The woman's eyes drooped before the detective's searching gaze.

Carter was scarcely prepared to meet such a young and handsome female when Mrs. Scudd entered the room, but he quickly recovered himself.

"Won't you be seated, madam?" he asked, by way of saying something.

"I had rather stand," was the answer. "You—you are the detective."

He bowed.

"I am."

"Oh, I hope you will be successful in quickly getting at the truth of this terrible affair!"

"I shall do my best, I assure you. I find it necessary to ask you some questions."

"I am ready to give you any information that can be of service in solving the mystery of poor Charley's death."

"To begin with, I wish to ask if at any time to-day you heard a sound like a pistol-shot?"

"I did not."

"You did not suspect anything was wrong till you entered your husband's room and saw the body on the cot?"

"No, sir."

"Why did you go to that room?"

Mrs. Scudd hesitated and her eyes drooped again.

"I really do not know," was her low reply.

"I think I was lonely."

"Great Scott!" thought Carter, though he took good care not to speak the words aloud. "Can it be this charming young creature is really in love with that poddish old sailor?"

He coughed behind his hand, which caused Mrs. Scudd to quickly lift her eyes. Not till that moment had he observed how darkly magnetic and flashing were those eyes. Something about them attracted him and caused him to catch his breath.

Almost as quickly as they had been lifted, those eyes fell before his earnest look.

"I sometimes get lonesome and go there," she explained, as if she wanted to say something.

"Very naturally," said Cal, although he did not think it was such a natural thing. "You rapped at the door?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did Captain Scudd immediately reply?"

"He did not."

"Is this a common occurrence?"

"What do you mean, sir?"

"Does he usually fail to reply at once when you knock?"

"No, sir. But there have been times when he has failed to do so."

"Then you thought nothing strange of it?"

"I did not."

"You called to him?"

"Yes."

"Then he replied?"

"He did."

"You told him who you were and he came to the door at once?"

"Well, not exactly. He seemed to hesitate about coming to the door. He came part way and then asked me what I wanted."

"Your reply?"

"That I wanted to come in."

"And then he opened the door?"

"He did—after some fumbling for a brief space of time."

"You immediately entered the room?"

"Yes, sir; and almost the first thing I saw was the body on the couch."

"Ah?"

"I thought nothing of it, although it gave me a start to find some one with the captain. But the next minute I saw the revolver on the floor. I pointed to it, and then my husband cried out something, of which I only caught the word dead. I looked at Charley and saw how ghastly and rigid was his face, and then the room began to whirl around me and everything grew black."

"You fainted?"

"Yes, sir."

Up to this point she had remained standing, but now she sunk into the chair, as if her strength had suddenly deserted her. She did not seem striving to make an impression, but her manner was perfectly natural, apparently.

"When you recovered you were—where?"

"In the room."

"Did you know Captain Scudd intended sending for a detective?"

"It was by my advice he did so."

"Have you ever noticed anything odd about your husband?"

Again those dark eyes flashed up at him.

"What do you mean, sir?"

"Have you ever observed anything eccentric in his manner?"

"Much, for, to say the very least, he is an eccentric man, sir."

"Has he ever seemed absent-minded?"

"At times."

"Could not remember things that had occurred?"

"Yes, sir."

"What have you thought of these spells?"

"That he had studied so much his memory was failing. He is at work on an invention of some kind to be used on ocean steamers. It was by an invention he acquired his present wealth, but he thinks he has struck a still greater idea, only he had never been quite able to bring it to perfection. Sometimes he will spend days locked in that horrid room, not even coming out to eat. He will have his food taken there, and when he is utterly exhausted, will sleep for a brief space of time on that cot. It is then he is trying to bring his invention to perfection, and he usually comes forth in a wretched humor, for he never quite succeeds. Then perhaps he will not go near that room again for weeks."

The detective listened with interest, for he was learning something of Captain Scudd that might possibly be of advantage to him. He wished to thoroughly understand the nature of the man, for he thought he could do better if he did.

"Is it after one of those long spells in that room that he seems absent-minded?"

"Not always, although he is sometimes unable to tell whether he has spent one day or ten in there."

"Does he ever appear wild and unreasonable?"

"Once or twice I have fancied so, but it was about the invention. That is the only thing that throws him off his balance."

"Do you know if he was working on this invention to-day?"

"I think he has been at work on it for the past three days."

Carter walked across the room and back, then he made a few hasty notes in his little book.

"Now," he said, "what can you tell me about this young man—Charles Thornton?"

"What do you wish to know?"

"What were his habits?"

"They might have been steadier."

"What was the relation between the captain and Thornton?"

"I presume you know Captain Scudd was his guardian?"

"Yes."

"He had charge of the property to which Charley was heir. Captain Scudd tried to restrain the young man and keep him from squandering his possession, and the result was an occasional disagreement. I think they quarreled last evening—I am sure they did, for I heard a few words as I happened to be passing the door of that room."

"Then the door must have been open, for when it is closed, the sound of a pistol-shot in that room does not alarm the household."

"That is not so very singular."

"No?"

"No, sir. Had the report been heard, it is possible nothing would have been thought of it. In one of those closets he has a chest of chemicals, and he often experiments with them while in that room. They have something to do with his invention, although I do not understand what. Very often explosions are heard, but they are explosions of the chemicals."

"This is important," said Cal. "I have been wondering why that pistol-shot was not heard. This explains it."

"The door was slightly open last evening. I did not pause to listen, but I heard Charley declare he would raise a row if the captain did not give him a certain amount of money. His voice showed he was decidedly angry, and I heard Captain Scudd reply in a harsher tone than is usual with him. Then I went upstairs."

"Is the captain a man of violent temper?"

"If so, I have never seen a display of it. He has always been very kind and considerate with me."

"Were you on friendly terms with young Thornton?"

"Yes, sir."

"He always treated you most considerately?"

"He treated me with such respect as was due his uncle's wife."

"He was in no way presuming?"

"Only once."

"Ah! When was that?"

"Several weeks ago. He had been drinking. I gave him a talking to that sobered him up, and he begged my pardon. Never since by word or look has he overstepped the bounds of propriety."

"Do you think it possible he committed suicide?"

"He may have done so while intoxicated, although it does not seem probable."

"How do you explain the fact that Captain Scudd was found in the room with the corpse, and still did not seem to know anything about it?"

"Oh, sir! I can't explain that! I do not understand it! It is terrible—terrible!"

"You see it looks suspicious?"

She started to her feet.

"I care not how it looks!" she almost cried.

"Captain Scudd is my husband—a gentleman and a man of honor. He has done nothing wrong!"

Somehow her excited manner seemed uncalled for, but Carter remembered her nerves must be at a high tension, and that might cause her to act strangely.

"There is no accusation against your husband, madam," he calmly said; "but you must see his position. Unless this matter can be cleared up, and he can be proved innocent, he will surely suffer for the murder of Charles Thornton."

His words were harsher than he had intended to make them when he began to speak, and he immediately regretted having uttered them. By instinct a gentleman, he sometimes found it most repulsive to carry out the duties of his profession. Many times he was compelled to stoop to do things which duty demanded, but which galled his very soul.

Mrs. Scudd recoiled with a little cry, and clutched at the back of the chair.

"No, no, no!" she hoarsely whispered. "You do not mean that! No, no!"

"I humbly beg your pardon for my hasty words," came from the detective's lips. "I should have been more considerate."

With an apparent effort, she straightened up before him. Once more those magnetic eyes met his.

"I believe, sir, a wife cannot be compelled to testify against her husband?"

"Assuredly not, madam."

"Then my lips shall be sealed."

"Do you believe your husband guiltless?"

"Of course I do!"

"Then it may be for the best to tell the whole truth. Of that you can better decide at a later period."

"But what I have told you, sir, will—"

"Have no fear. I have been summoned to get at the truth of this affair, but I shall be discreet."

She held out her hand. He took it. It was hot and throbbing as if the woman had a fever.

"I thank you," she said; and those flashing eyes were hidden by the long, drooping lashes.

CHAPTER VI.

PICKING UP SOME POINTS

DETECTIVE CARTER was far from being satisfied with the result of his investigations. The mystery was still a deep one, and no new light had been thrown upon it. When Mrs. Scudd returned to her room, Cal sought the butler.

"Did you let Charley Thornton in to-day?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did he come to the house afoot?"

"No, sir; he came in a carriage."

"Did you notice anything peculiar in his manner?"

"I thought his eyes looked wild like, sir."

"He did not stagger?"

"No, sir."

"Have you noticed the sound of a pistol shot any time since he came in?"

"No, sir."

"That was all; the butler could tell him nothing more."

Cal next sought the doctor and the captain.

"Take my advice," he said; "call in the undertaker at once and notify young Thornton's sister. Do not try to conceal anything, for it will look suspicious. An inquest must be held, and the sooner it takes place the better. I must be present to testify and make notes."

"What do you think?" asked the captain.

"What conclusion have you arrived at, sir?"

"No conclusion."

"Do—do you think it was suicide?"

"I spoke the truth when I said I had arrived at no conclusion. Can you tell me anything about the young man's associates? I must find some of them."

"I know nothing of them."

"Nor the places he frequented?"

"He sometimes went to the Hoffman House."

"Any other place?"

"He seldom told me where he went. I know of no other place he frequented."

"Then to the Hoffman House I will go. I must be present at the inquest. A notice sent to my office will reach me, for I shall look for it."

A few moments later, he took his departure.

Straight to the Hoffman House he made his way. He had secured a picture of Charley Thornton, and with the aid of that, he made his inquiries. Almost the first person he struck knew the young man.

"He sometimes comes in with some of the bloods about town," this individual explained. "I think he has money on the races. He was in here last evening, and, from his talk, I fancied he had been a heavy loser or was talking for the sake of using his mouth. He seemed in a reckless mood."

"Did you notice who he was with?"

"Yes, two of the youths who wish to be known as sports. They opened some wine. Thornton settled for it. Then a tall and neatly dressed man came and whispered something to young Thornton. He was about going away with the tall man when a young man came in and called him out on important business, he said. By Jove! there's the very young fellow now!"

He pointed out a well-dressed, manly-appearing young fellow, apparently about twenty-five years of age, who had just entered and seemed looking for some one.

The detective thanked the man and made his way toward the one pointed out.

"Excuse me," said Cal. "I am looking for Charley Thornton. A gentleman over there said he believed you knew Thornton."

The young man's blue eyes ran swiftly over the detective's figure and rested on his face.

"He was right," was the reply; "I do know him, but I may not be able to aid in your search for him. I was looking for him myself."

"Are you a particular friend of his?"

There was a moment of hesitation.

"I can't say that I am."

"You met him here last night?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you called him out on 'particular business.' Do you mind telling what that business was?"

A cynical look flashed across the young man's face.

"I advised him to go home before he became any drunker."

Carter was surprised.

"Rather free for one who is not a particular friend, eh?" smiled the young man.

"It struck me so," confessed the ferret.

"Now look here," came from the youth's lips. "I want to know what Charley Thornton has been up to that they have put a detective after him."

"A detective—"

"That's what you are, I should say."

Cal saw that it was useless to conceal the truth, so he bowed.

"You are right," was his reply, "I am a detective. Any information you can give me concerning Charley Thornton will be appreciated."

"If you want to get anything out of me, tell me what he has done. My name is Val Sedman. I will be frank, for I believe in frankness. I am engaged to Thornton's sister, and that is why I take an interest in him. Now you will see how the land lays. If you expect to get anything damaging against Charley out of me, you will be disappointed."

"You have been frank, as you say, and I will be equally frank with you. Charley Thornton is dead!"

Val Sedman nearly fell down in his astonishment.

"Good God!" he gasped.

It was some moments before he recovered sufficiently to utter another word. He could only stare at the detective, horror in his eyes.

"You don't mean that?" he finally exclaimed.

"But I do."

"It is impossible! Why he was as well as ever last evening!"

"To-day he is dead with a bullet in his brain."

"Murder?"

"Or suicide."

"Where is he?"

"In his uncle's house."

"Where did this terrible thing take place?"

"In that house."

"When?"

"To-day."

"Great Heaven! this will be a terrible blow for Ollie. She thought everything of Charley, though he was only her half-brother. It will nearly kill her! He was always so kind and tender toward her! Why, it does not seem possible this thing can be true! Tell me the particulars."

The detective did so, making the story as brief and direct as possible.

"Charley Thornton was murdered!" That was Val Sedman's assertion when he had heard the particulars.

"You see the importance of telling me everything you know about the young man," said Cal. "I am going to sift the mystery of his death."

"And I will do my best to aid you. What do you want to know?"

"I have heard Thornton speculated—bet on the races, etc. Is that true?"

"I am sorry to say it is."

"He sometimes lost?"

"Of course, and he lost big sums, too. He had been losing yesterday, and that was what ailed him. He was being played for a sucker. There was a certain man who had a grip on him."

"Who?"

"The one I took him away from last night—Silky Hall."

"Silky Hall! He is a sharp—the associate of crooks!"

"Exactly. That's the man who has done his level best to ruin Charley Thornton. He has it in for me, for I have coaxed Charley from him several times. He was dragging him off to some place last night, but I induced Charley to go home."

"Silky Hall goes on the list," nodded Clear-Grit Cal. "He shall be shadowed."

CHAPTER VII.

PLAYING THE SHADOW.

"AND I would like the job of shadowing him," quickly declared Val Sedman.

"You?" exclaimed Carter.

"Yes. Why not?"

"My dear fellow, the man is a sharp."

"What of that?"

"It will be a dangerous job to dog his footsteps."

Val laughed.

"I do not mind the danger."

"It will also be a difficult one. It will take a shadower who is not a novice in the business."

"Well, I am ready to try it," said the young man, gravely. "I believe I can do it all right, and I want to have a hand in clearing up this mystery."

"Well, I'll tell you what you do: Go tell Thornton's sister what has happened—impart

the news as gently as possible. Then come to my office. If I am not there, the boy will tell you where to find me. Here is the number."

"All right," said Val. "Find something for me to do. I want to have a part in the business. Ollie will expect me to, you know."

They parted.

Carter went directly to his office.

There he found a beardless youth who was lounging in an office chair, his feet on the top of a writing desk and the stump of a cigar in his mouth. He was very well dressed, but there was a certain air of carelessness about his appearance that seemed to indicate he was a happy-go-lucky individual.

"Hello," he nodded, as Cal came in, his feet suddenly disappearing from the desk. "What's on?"

"Business, Shark."

"Am I in it?"

"Yes."

"Good! I'm tired of hanging on a peg. Hope it's something lively. Give us de pints."

Shark had been a street gamin and afterwards a "tough boy" with a desire to become a detective. By accident Clear-Grit Cal had discovered there was good stuff in him and had taken him in as an assistant. He knew every crook and turn of the great city, and proved to be a wonderful "shadower." Carter never trusted anything of vital importance in his hands, unless it was a case of shadowing.

Sometimes when Shark was excited or interested he would fall into the dialect of the street gamin.

"Do you know Silky Hall?" asked Cal.

"Better than his own mammy does."

"Well, I want you to shadow him."

"What has he been up to?"

"I don't know as he has been up to anything, but that is what I want you to find out. Last evening he was at the Hoffman House bar. Trace him from the time he left there up to the present time. Can you do it?"

"Can I breathe! Can a frog jump!"

"That settles it."

"Where do you want me to report—here?"

"If I am not here, you will find me at this address. Where is Blinker?"

"Asleep in the back room. Said he had to sit up all night with his sick sister."

"All right. Strike for Hall. Good luck."

Shark threw the butt of the cigar into the cuspidore, crushed his soft hat over his eyes and hurried out, tucking the address Carter had given him into his vest pocket.

The detective then went into the dingy little back room and aroused the office-boy.

"Brace up, Blinker," he said. "You've got to look after things now."

"Where's Shark?" asked the boy, rubbing his eyes.

"Off on business."

"Den I'll git a brace on, boss. I'se pritty nigh used up fer der want of sleep, but dis nap'll set me all right."

"You will have to look after the office and answer the telephone, for I shall not be here a great deal."

Carter then went back to his desk, and for an hour he busied himself there, looking over some papers and studying the notes he had taken in his little book.

The Scudd case would have seemed simple enough had he been willing to admit the captain killed his nephew, but Carter did not like to think so. Somehow, he was inclined to believe that was not the true solution of the mystery.

But it looked very black for Captain Scudd. The old gentleman was certainly in a tight place, and unless something could be done to rescue him, he would be apt to suffer.

"I suppose I will have to look up his record all the way back to the time when he was a sailor," thought Cal. "It may be time wasted, and it may give me the key to the whole thing. One never knows when he'll strike the right trail. Of course the old captain may have deliberately murdered young Thornton."

He then went to the telephone and called for a certain down-town marine journal, on which a retired sea-captain was a sort of editorial figure-head, the real editor being a brilliant young man who could write a telling article on deep-water harbors, although he had never been further out at sea than the eastern limit of the Sound.

It happened that the "well-known editor" of the journal was well acquainted with Captain Scudd, and able to give Carter many points concerning him.

Within thirty minutes, the detective was seated in the office of the journal, talking with the editor.

This conversation lasted half an hour, and the ferret departed a much wiser man in one channel, and still more firmly convinced Captain Scudd did not murder his nephew.

As he made his way toward the Sixth avenue Elevated, he was not a little surprised to hear the newsboys crying:

"Extr-ah! All about der mysterious murder! Paper, mister?"

He bought one, and found a column and a half concerning the death of Charley Thornton.

"Well, it beats the dickens how quickly these newspapers get hold of anything of this kind and get it into print. A little more than two hours ago Captain Scudd protested against an account of the affair going into the papers, and it is not probable the secret was divulged immediately after my departure. All the same, the papers have got it."

On the train he read the account, and a scowl settled over his face.

"I expected it," he muttered, as he discovered the papers, with one accord, spoke in a manner that insinuated there could be no doubt as to the murderer. "They take not a bit of stock in the captain's story. Well, so much the better for me, if I succeed in showing them they are all fools. I shall have about a dozen of the so-called 'reporter-detectives' to contend against, and not one out of twenty of that class know their business. They are generally very fresh."

Going to the office, he found Val Sedman waiting for him there.

"Ollie has gone to the captain's," said the young man. "I came here, and the boy said you would return soon."

Cal found there was no word from Shark, and so he told the eager young man he could not make use of him then.

"Call around to-morrow," was his advice, and Val departed in a disappointed frame of mind.

Cal patronized a neighboring restaurant, returned and wrote some letters, and then, having had no call from Scudd's, resolved to return to the captain's.

The street lights were glimmering as he made his way up town. He was on the point of hailing a car, when he felt a touch on his arm, and a low voice said:

"There goes Silky Hall—the man in the light suit, with the coat on his arm."

The speaker was Shark. Without attracting the attention of a single passer, he indicated the man he was "shadowing."

"Struck anything?" asked Cal, as he walked along at a little distance from Shark, not even looking toward the young man.

"Nothing much."

"All right. Stick."

When Shark had passed on, Cal suddenly changed his plans.

"I'll take a hand in this shadowing business myself," he muttered. "It is not at all likely there is going to be an inquest to-day. It is too late now. Somehow, I believe Silky Hall had a finger in the pie in one way or another."

So the detective followed as a shadow on the gambler's track.

Silky Hall strolled leisurely toward Sixth avenue. He was neatly and tastily dressed and was smoking a good cigar. He carried a cane, as well as the light top-coat thrown over his left arm. He seemed in no particular hurry, and apparently did not dream he was tracked.

He turned up the avenue. Near Thirtieth street he entered what appeared to be a cigar store.

Cal knew the place.

The cigar store was simply a blind to one of the biggest gambling houses in the city.

Shark soon followed Hall into the store, and, strolling past the place a few seconds later, Cal discovered neither man was in the little front room.

"Well," he thought, "I have a fancy to go in there, but some of them might know me and think I was piping the place for the police. I must be in some kind of disguise."

He hastened to the nearest hotel, knowing Shark would not lose track of the gambler if Hall left the place. In the toilet-room of the hotel he soon made a transformation in his appearance. He went in a common Yankee, but he came out a "bloomin' Briton," mutton-chop whiskers and the touch of a pencil and a little paint here and there on his face worked a great change. His clothes were not just what he desired to make the alteration complete, so he slipped into a clothing store and purchased a coat, hat and necktie. His regular garments he dispatched to his office by a messenger-boy.

Only a comparatively short time had been spent in the metamorphosis, but the change was

ing wonderful. In the high-headed Eng-
man who turned into Sixth avenue no one
ould have recognized the detective who passed
the cigar store thirty minutes before.

Cal made his way to the cigar store without
hesitation and entered boldly. Without pausing
or displaying any unfamiliarity in the place, he
passed round behind the counter and paused at
a heavy door that had the conventional "peep-
hole."

"Awl right, don't yaw know," he said, his
voice being that of a very languid and world-
weary Briton.

The man behind the counter had looked sharp-
ly at Cal, but the deliberate assurance of the de-
tective convinced him it was some tourist who
had been there before. His hand fell beneath the
counter and touched a button, whereupon the
door quietly swung open.

Cal entered.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MONTE CARLO OF GOTHAM.

A TRANSFORMATION scene greeted his eyes.
He found himself in a large room, at least fifty
feet long. The air was so thick with tobacco-
smoke that it could almost be cut with a knife,
but the lights of the place revealed the figures of
two hundred men, these figures growing dimmer
in the haze of the smoke at the further end of the
place. The greater part of those within the
"Monte Carlo of Gotham" were gambling,
either at hazard, roulette or faro.

The most of the gamblers were young men
with pale faces and reckless looks. A study of
many would reveal the fact that they were al-
ready breaking down physically and, unless they
made an abrupt change in their mode of living—
which was not to be expected—they would soon
go the pace that kills and reach the end of the
journey—a coffin!

Those young fellows were living many years
in one and, at the very time when their hearts
should have been full of cheer and their steps
buoyant, they were *blase* and languid, taking a
somber view of life and firm in the belief that
there are no joys enduring in this world.

The whirr of little balls, the clink of chips and
the hum of voices affected Cal strangely when
he first entered, but he soon recovered himself,
although he wondered why the sounds were not
heard on the sidewalk without. There were ten
or twelve tables in full blast, and each table was
surrounded by a little knot of anxious players.

Although the ventures were small, it was plain
that the risks of many a callow youth meant a
great deal to him. Occasionally a low fierce
curse would be uttered beneath the breath, and
a player would turn from the table where he had
squandered his last dollar.

There were several waiters in the room, their
white aprons being seen to flit here and there, as
they brought on drinks or cigars. The faces of
some players were flushed with drink and their
eyes red with the light fed by the demon of gam-
ing.

Cal's entrance was unnoticed. He sauntered
about the place without getting a second glance.
It was not long before he came to a table where
Silky Hall was sitting, talking in low tones with
a companion whom Cal instantly recognized as
a sharper with a dark record, a man known as
"Tired Moore," and who was said to be almost
too lazy to eat. For all of that, he was flashily,
even expensively, dressed.

Cal looked for Shark and discovered the young
man playing roulette at a close-by table.

"I don't fancy that," thought the disguised
detective. "He should be trying to hear what
these fellows are saying."

Without more ado, Cal sat down at the table,
striking a little bell upon it. He did not look at
Hall or his companion, but he saw them both
glance at him. When the waiter appeared, he said:

"Waitaw, I wawnt a cocktail, don't yaw
know. Now mix me up a weglaw cocktail;
don't give me awny demned pawtent-medisawn
mixtchaw. And, waitaw?"

"Yes, sir."

"Bwing me the best cigar to be hawd in New
Yawk. I don't wawnt any cawbage-leaf to-
bacaw eithaw. You hawve such confounded
mean cigaws in this bloody countway thawt the
sight awve them is nawseating, don't yaw
know. I am Lawd Alfwed Twombly, saw, and
a particulaw fwiend awve the Pwince awve
Wales, saw. Now, be demned lively in fwilling
this awdah."

The waiter departed, something like a grin on
his face, while Cal lay back in his chair, pro-
ducing a single-barreled eye-glass, through
which he stared in the boldest manner at Silky
Hall and his associate.

But it happened that Hall and Moore were too
busy talking to pay any particular attention to
the man, even though "Lawd Alfwed's" man-
ner was little short of insolent. In fact, the two
men were on the verge of a quarrel.

Although they were speaking in low tones, the
disguised detective could now and then catch a
few words. He soon learned that the trouble
was over a "boodle" of some sort.

"You've got ter do der square or I'll blow on
yer!" declared Tired Moore, allowing his voice
to rise a little.

"Hush up!" growled Hall. "You'll have all
the crowd looking this way."

"Let 'em look an' be—"

The crook did not finish.

"You seem determined to pick a row!" grated
Hall.

Moore looked sullen.

"Look here," and the dark-faced gambler
lowered his voice till only an occasional word
could be caught by the detective, "if you want
trouble, you shall have it. I have two friends
to your one in this place."

"I don't want no trouble if youse do der
white; but I hain't no chump ter be played dirt
der way youse are tryin' ter. Dat's w'at's der
matter wid me. See?"

"Oh, come off, Moore! Nobody is playing
you dirt. You are imagining all this."

"But where's my part of der bood'?"

"You have had it."

"Mighty small lot I got!"

"You received a fair share."

"Bah!"

"It is true."

"Dat's guff."

"It's straight."

"But youse said dere was a big snatch in it."

"And so there was, but the young fool has
gone and blown a hole in his head."

"Der pape's don't give it dat way."

"No."

"Dey say it was murder."

"That shows what fools these reporters can
make of themselves. The boy was in a bad way
last night, and still worse to-day. His losses
broke him all up. It is pretty certain he put a
bullet into his own head."

Tired Moore looked at Hall insinuatingly.

"That sounds very well, but I'll bet der
drinks you don't mean it."

The gambler scowled.

"You're altogether too familiar, Moore.
You'll get pulled down one of these days."

"An' youse 'll git pulled in. Oh, it hain't no
use ter play funny wid me. I'm on."

"Well, what in blazes do you mean?"

"I guess youse wants it t'ought der fresh
blowed hisself cold."

Hall half started up, as if to grasp the insin-
uating crook by the throat, but he thought better
of it and settled back in his seat.

"You make me tired!" he snapped. "You
are a knowing bloke—you are!"

"Well, I am some," grinned Moore, nodding
his head.

"You know too much for your health!"

"I know too much fer your health! Dat's
w'at's der matter."

"What do you think I care what the papers
say about this? If it was murder, it is plain the
kid's old uncle did the job."

"Mebbe so."

"There is no other way."

At this moment the waiter placed Cal's cock-
tail and cigar before him. The detective lifted
the cocktail and sniffed suspiciously of it, and
then muttered:

"Haw!"

With that exclamation, he put it down and
paid the bill, not failing to tip the waiter in a
manner that attracted attention.

"Something faw yawself, you know, waitaw,"
he said, as he placed a piece of money in the
hand of the white-aproned individual. "We
Englishmen of wank awlways wemembaw the
waitaw. If this cocktail is nawt awl wight I
shall feel it me duty to knawk yaw eye out, you
know. Thawt is awl, saw."

Whereupon the waiter retired.

"Lawd Alfwed" seemed in no particular
hurry to drink the liquor, but he leisurely light-
ed the cigar. When there was a good oppor-
tunity to do so without being observed, he
emptied the cocktail into a handy cuspidore.

Clear-Grit Cal was a temperate man, and he
never touched liquor of any kind as a beverage.

Meantime, the conversation between Silky
Hall and Tired Moore had taken a still more
serious turn. Moore had been drinking and was
ugly.

"Youse hain't done der right t'ing by me,
Silky," he declared, "an' ye know it."

"Oh, drop that, Moore!" snapped the gambler.
"You have lived off me for the last three
months, and now you kick and say I have not
used you white."

"An' youse have lived off der green."

"Well, he's croaked now, and so both of us are
out in the cold."

"I don't reckon you are out in der cold much.
I'm der one as is gittin' left, but I hain't ter
be shook dat easy. If youse don't divvy, I'll
squawk."

"Squawk? Why, man, what can you tell?"

"More dan youse wants told. I'll ring yous
inter dis business an' der perlice'll haul ye over
der coals."

This threat aroused Hall.

"If you dare blow anything, I'll have you
breaking stone before you know it!" he hissed.
"I'm not a man to be bluffed or bullied by a
common thief of your cut."

"Who's a common thief?"

"You are!"

"You lie!"

Both men sprung up. Out shot Silky Hall's
fist, and "smack" it struck fairly between
Tired Moore's eyes. The common rascal was
knocked back against the table, grasping at
anything to keep from going to the floor.

His hand happened to fasten in Cal Carter's
false beard.

The mutton-chop whiskers were snatched
from the detective's face!

CHAPTER IX.

OUT OF THE TRAP.

It was a most unlucky occurrence, for Car-
ter's disguise had been so effectual that but for
the accidental exposure he would not have been
suspected by any one within the gambling-house.
Of course the sudden and astonishing removal of
"Lawd Alfwed's" whiskers attracted universal
attention.

"A spotter! A spy!"

That was the cry that went up.

"Cut him off!"

"Don't let him get out!"

"Make him explain!"

The trouble between Silky Hall and Tired
Moore was of no moment now. Even the prin-
ciples seemed to have forgotten their recent dis-
agreement.

There was a rush of men, and the exposed de-
tective's retreat by the door was cut off.

No one was more astonished than Shark. He
gazed at his chief in wonder for a moment, but
he was shrewd enough not to betray the fact
that he was "in" with Cal.

Detective Carter coolly picked up the mutton-
chop whiskers which Tired Moore had dropped,
and thrust them into his pocket. Then he arose
to his feet as deliberately as can be imagined
and calmly surveyed the excited throng. He
did not seem to mind in the least the ugly looks
which were cast upon him.

"Good-evening, gentlemen," he said, pleas-
antly. "This proves to be something of a sur-
prise-party."

"It will be a sorry surprise for you," was the
retort of a big man who was sometimes pointed
out as the proprietor of the place. "We treat
spies tough here."

"Of course it will be useless for me to deny I
am a spy, for—"

"You'd be lyin'!"

"I knows him!" cried a big iron-jawed fellow
who wore an immense blazer in his neck-scarf.

"He's Cal Carter, ther Private."

"If you know me so well," came steadily from
Cal's lips, "you ought to know I do not run
with the police. Only so far as it is necessary
do I have anything to do with them."

At this there was a chorus of groans, hoots
and hisses; but the detective smiled as blandly
as if he stood in the midst of friends. For all of
his calmness, he fully realized the danger. It
was not probable these men would commit mur-
der, although without a doubt there were those
within that very room vicious enough to com-
mit any crime.

But there were too many of them. It would
not do to take a human life, for such a thing
could not be kept quiet; but Cal Cartar could
consider himself a fortunate man if he escaped
without being pounded and kicked into uncon-
sciousness.

Still he was calm and his brain was busy de-
vising some kind of a scheme that would enable
him to escape. He knew he could give Shark
the wink and that worthy would do his best to
bring the police down on the place. But the
chances were the officers would be very reluc-
tant about making a descent, and when they did
move it would be at a snail's pace. That would
give the gang plenty of time to do their work

and vanish. It would be doubtful if the officers would find so much as a roulette table.

He decided he must escape by his own efforts, unaided by any one, unless Shark found a way to assist him. He did not underestimate his peril, but he simply kept himself calm.

It was this coolness in the face of great danger that had caused him to be known as Clear-Grit Cal.

"What are you in here for?" cried one.

"I came here on business," was the reply.

Then there was a howl of derision—a howl that must have been heard in the street.

The most brutal of the gang pushed toward the detective.

"Down him!" was the hoarse exclamation uttered by many lips. "He means to blow away!"

Cal had thrust his hands into his pockets. The overturned table was at his back.

"Keep off!" he commanded. "If you fellows will listen to reason, I will convince you it was not my intention to blow on this place."

"Oh, he is a ready liar!"

"He'll tell a slick story!"

"Hit der bloke in der neck!"

"Smash his jaw!"

"Get back!"

Out snapped a brace of revolvers. Cal Carter was an expert, and he could shoot with either hand or both at once. His eyes were beginning to flash, although the shadow of that cool smile still haunted his lips.

The startled ruffians fell back before those ready weapons. With their hands clinched and their faces black with anger, they glared at the man who so calmly defied them all.

Cal had taken care to face Silky Hall and Tired Moore, and one of his revolvers was turned on the former.

Hall now stepped to the front.

"Look here," came from his lips, "you say you did not come in here to spot the place. If that is true, will you kindly tell why you did come in? You are here, and you came in disguise, which makes it look very black for you."

"I have no objection to telling you why I came. It was to shadow a man who was in here."

"And that man—who is he?"

"That is none of your business."

A hissing sound came from Hall's teeth.

"It is plain you do not understand your danger, my man," said the smooth gambler.

"That is where you are mistaken," replied Cal. "But it is dead certain you do not understand yours."

"You dare not use those revolvers."

"Don't fool yourself."

"If you did so, you'd get the breath of life kicked out of you."

"And you would already have it let out of you by a bullet hole. I have you spotted, and you will hear from me, if there is trouble."

The gambler did not like this.

"Look here," he said, "I'm called a bad man when I'm mad."

"Well?"

"If you get me down on you, it'll be bad for your health."

"Oh, w'at's der use of all dis pow-wow?" cried Tired Moore. "Let's all run over der bloke. We don't want none of dem private sneaks here, an' we hain't goin' ter hev 'em."

"Oh, you are in it, are you?" half-laughed Cal. "Just now you seem to have forgotten the rap your friend gave you a few seconds ago. Your eagerness to do me up has banished that from your mind completely."

"Dere's lots of time ter settle dat. We'se goin' ter settle youse fu'st."

"Bet you don't."

Some of the callow lads in the gambling room were very much frightened, but a burly fellow had placed himself at the door and refused to let any one out till the trouble was settled.

Shark had edged toward the door. Cal saw this move of his pupil, and he knew it meant something, so he held himself ready to act instantly when the right time came.

The threatening revolvers held the gang at bay for a time, but it would not always be thus. The moments were passing, and the men growing more determined with each one.

"Teach the spy a lesson!" cried a voice in the crowd. "He'll ruin this place anyway, but it isn't best to let him get off scot free."

"That person does well to keep himself concealed behind others," said Cal. "He does not seem to have sufficient courage to come to the front and make his talk."

At this there was a stir, but the man did not come forward.

Meantime Shark had reached the door. He

did not attempt to go out, but he came up behind the burly fellow guarding the door. A short sand-bag suddenly found its way into Shark's grip, and the following instant he used it.

Down to the floor dropped the guard, Shark giving him a push that sent him stunned and dazed into a corner.

Then the crafty young fellow tore open the door, yelling:

"Now's yer time, boys! Git out of here, ev'ry bloke of yer! Der perlice are comin', an' youse'll all be pulled if yer don't do der vanishin' act!"

The result was an instantaneous surge toward the open door.

Silky Hall understood what had happened, and made for Cal, snarling:

"The trick won't get you off, you sneak!"

The detective met the gambler more than half-way. Parrying a blow, Cal dashed the muzzle of the weapon into Hall's face, knocking the man backward.

Then the Never-Say-Die Detective made a short run and leaped to the top of a faro table, from which he vaulted into the air fairly over the heads of the ruffians who stretched their hands upward to grasp him.

He landed on the shoulders of a large man who was in the very center of the crowd rushing toward the door.

What unreasoning creatures human beings are when seized by a panic! Like a lot of frightened sheep or cattle they pushed, jammed and crowded out through the doorway, overturning the counter in the cigar store and breaking the show-case, then went pouring out on Sixth avenue, causing the passers-by to pause and stare in wonder.

"What is it—a fire?" was the universal question.

But the escaping gamblers did not tarry to explain. It was simply wonderful how swiftly they disappeared after reaching the outer air.

Cal was carried out by the man on whose shoulders he had lighted, and he disappeared with the rest.

Twenty minutes later, he and Shark were together, laughing heartily over the exciting adventure, and congratulating themselves on the fortunate termination.

CHAPTER X.

LIZETTE'S STORY.

THE following day Detective Carter again appeared at Captain Scudd's. He learned the coroner had been informed and that the inquest would probably take place that afternoon.

The morning papers had obtained long articles about the strange death of young Thornton, and with one accord they had insinuated Captain Scudd might tell more about it if he cared to do so.

Plainly, the old salt's story was discredited. One paper went so far as to suggest that the captain's handling young Thornton's money be thoroughly investigated.

"I believe the fools are all adrift," muttered Cal grimly. "If Captain Scudd killed Charley Thornton it was not because he had in any way mishandled the young man's inheritance."

This he afterward confirmed by investigation.

Cal was led into the house without arousing the captain, but the butler told him Captain Scudd had been in the library for two hours.

The detective wished to question the servants, and, after having a brief talk with the butler, which really amounted to nothing, he sought Mrs. Scudd's maid, who was a French girl known as Lizette.

The maid did not wish to talk with the detective, but she found she could not avoid it. At first she was sulky, but Carter assured her it would be best to tell the truth, and she would only injure herself by falsehood.

"Do you like your mistress?" asked the detective, wishing to get Lizette started.

"Oui, monsieur."

"She is always kind to you?"

An instant of hesitation.

"Oui, monsieur."

"Ah, Lizette! why won't you tell the exact truth! She is sometimes fretful?"

"Oh, one leetle beet sometime, not vera oftun."

"She speaks harshly?"

"Sometime she be mad."

"I thought so. When is she so?"

"When she have take ze wine."

"Oh—ho! Then my lady indulges in wine?"

"Zey all do zat, monsieur—all ze tone. I haf work at one, two, t'ree—many place; zey all drink ze wine. Zey do zat on ze sly, but zey haf

eet jus' ze same. *N'importe.*" (It matters not.)

"Perhaps you think so, Lizette; but I have a different view. The woman who drinks is in danger. She may never fall, but she must have a strong will of her own. She is liable to make a *faux pas.*"

The maid was silent.

"Now tell me the truth, Lizette," Cal continued, "does your mistress ever drink to excess?"

"Ex-cess? What ees zat?"

"Take too much—become intoxicated?"

"Oh, vera seldom."

"Then she does so occasionally?"

"Monsieur, eet is not ze right for me to tell zese t'ings. Eet is very wrong."

"It may be the only way to save Captain Scudd from a murder trial. I am a detective in the employ of the captain, and for that reason it is best that you should answer my questions. I am trying to get at the truth of Charley Thornton's death. You knew him?"

"Oui."

A blush stole to Lizette's cheeks.

"Ah, I see," smiled the detective. "Well, now, you are ready to do anything to aid me in discovering who killed Charley?"

"Oui, Oui!"

"Then you should answer all my questions. Remember, I am working to bring the culprit to justice."

Lizette bowed.

"Zen I weel answer, monsieur."

"Does your mistress sometimes become very angry when she has been drinking wine?"

"Oui. One time she strike me with her hand."

"Ah! What did you do?"

"I threaten to leave."

"But you did not?"

"No."

"Why?"

"Monsieur Charlee was here."

"I see. How did your mistress and Charley get along?"

"Oh, monsieur! she have a vera great passion for heem!"

Carter started.

"What is that, Lizette?"

The maid looked frightened and glanced around.

"Not'ing!" she answered, almost in a whisper—"not'ing at all!"

The detective's hand fell on Lizette's slender wrist.

"You have said too much to retreat now. Out with it all! That is the only thing to do. Was Mrs. Scudd in love with the young man?"

Lizette was scared, but she answered:

"Zat I do believe."

"What makes you think so?"

"*Ma fois!* she have his picture!"

"Oo-ho! This grows interesting! She possesses his picture, eh? Where does she keep it?"

"In her private chambare."

"So?"

"Oui. She oftun look at eet."

"You have seen her do that?"

Lizette nodded.

"When?"

"When she have been drink ze wine."

"You were in the chamber?"

"Oui. She take out ze picture of Charlee—she look at eet—she kiss eet!"

Carter started as if he had received an electric shock.

"Holy smoke!" he muttered. "This grows interesting. I wonder if the young rascal was false to his uncle and the old gentleman found it out? If so, the murder is explained, and Charley Thornton's blood is on Captain John Scudd's hands. He probably killed the boy in a fit of jealous rage. He may have been half or wholly crazed at the time. I believe I am on the track of a remarkable discovery."

But he did not even then dream how remarkable the discovery was to prove.

"She loved him, Lizette?"

"She did, monsieur."

"There is no doubt of it?"

"I have not ze one doubt."

"Were they much together?"

"Once."

"Once?"

"Oui."

"When?"

"Ze few weeks ago."

"You have seen them together?"

"Oh, many time."

"What were they doing?"

"Oh, madam she sing for heem—she play; he sing for her—wiz her. He have ze be-eautiful voice!"

"Where did this occur?"

"In ze parlor."
 "Nowhere else?"
 "Not zat I know."
 "Did he seem in love with her?"
 "No, monsieur; he like her—he never love her."
 "You seem very certain."
 "I am."
 "What makes you so?"
 "He tell me zat."

Carter smiled. He knew how much dependence was to be put in what the young man had told the maid.

Lizette was quick to understand that smile.
 "You t'ink he not tell me ze trute, monsieur, but I know zat he do so. He say she do fascinate heem when he be wiz her, but he no care for her when he be away. She make ze love to heem, and for a time he t'ink eet ees sport. Soon he see where eet take heem; zen he do stop."

"Are you sure he stopped there?"
 "Oui, monsieur."
 "What makes you so sure?"
 "One time I see zem in ze parlor."
 "Well?"
 "Zey not know eet."
 "Go on."
 "Madame she do make ze love to heem."
 "And you watched them?"
 "Oh, monsieur, my heart! I do hate her zen, for I fear he do care for her!"
 "I understand. You watched them, for you were jealous. Well, what did you see?"
 "I see madame talk to heem—she speak oh, vera low! I see her face—eet was red wiz her blood! I see her eyes—zey do shine like ze star! She bend ovare heem and her lips be close to hees."

"Go on!" came breathlessly from Carter.
 "He seem like one person fascinate by ze snail. He be still and look at her. She put her arms round hees neck. All ze time she talk low and I do not hear ze words. Zen she do kees heem!"

"What did he do?" asked Cal, holding himself in restraint. "Did he return her caresses?"

"No. When her lips do touch his he start like he was burn. He spring up and push her away. She catch her foot in ze dress and fall on ze floor."

"And then—what?"
 "He do not peek her up—he stand looking down at her. She do rise to her knee and hold out her hands to heem. 'Charlee!' she cry; but he motion her off."

"Great Scott! This may start me on the right road!"
 "Zen he say he have been wrong to be wiz her so much. He feel sorry."

"How did she receive this?"
 "Madame sudden grow vera angry. She spring up and come close to him, her hands clinch. She tell heem he is ze one great fool and she do hate heem!"

"How did he receive that?"
 "He speak of Monsieur Scudd—he say she should be true. Madame grow ze more angry at zis. She say Monsieur Scudd be vera old and she be young. Zen Charlee say he weel not be ze traitor to hees uncale. At zis she call heem fool again and swear she do hate heem—she weel make heem sora. Then she leave heem."

Detective Carter struck his hands together.
 "I am on the right track!" he softly cried.

CHAPTER XI.

A STARTLING POSSIBILITY.

CAL CARTER felt sure he had struck a trail that would lead him to the solution of Charley Thornton's mysterious death, but that mystery was still shrouded by shadows which seemed to defy penetration.

Could it be possible Captain Scudd's treacherous wife had killed the young man?

If so, how was it done with the captain in the room?

That was hard to answer.

If she had really killed him, it certainly was not possible the captain was an accomplice. Had he been, they might have manufactured a very different story than the one told—a story that would have averted suspicion from the captain.

But was the beautiful woman capable of such a crime?

It did not seem possible.

What more could the maid tell?

"After this rebuff, did Mrs. Scudd again seek the companionship of Charley Thornton?"

"I cannot say as to zat. I only see zem alone togethere one time."

"Where was that?"

"In ze hall."

"What happened then?"
 "She stop heem."
 "Ah?"
 "He try to pass, but she step in hees way."
 "And then—what?"
 "She hold out her hands like zis." Lizette illustrated, her gesture being an entreating one.
 "Did he take them?"
 "No."
 "He repelled her?"
 "He shake hees head and say he dare not."
 "What did she do then?"
 "She aske heem to be friend."
 "Did he agree?"
 "He say he weel evar be her friend, but not ze same as before. He say he dare not."
 "How did she receive that?"
 "She beg heem to be ze same."
 "But it was useless?"
 "Oui. He weel not. He is true to his uncale."

"Well," said Carter, slowly, "Mrs. Scudd is uncommonly beautiful, and I must say Charley Thornton was almost a remarkably virtuous young man. In that respect he was a wonder for these degenerate days. I honor him!"

"He was so good! *Ma fois!* he was like one god!"

"How did Mrs. Scudd behave after this second rebuff?"
 "She go to her room. Two hour aftare 'she do send for me. When I go zere I see she have been drink vera hard. Her face be flush and her eyes wild. She be intoxicate."

Carter nodded.
 "It is plain the woman was desperately in love with the young man. What occurred in her chamber?"

"She have his picture, and she do rave. She tell him how she hate heem. She truly frightun me she ees so violent."

"This grows more and more interesting! Did she injure the picture?"

"Oui. She throw eet on the floor and stamp her foot on eet. Zen she pick eet up and begin to shed ze tear while she kees eet and call heem her darling."

"What became of the picture?"
 "She lock eet in her drawer."

Carter thought all this over swiftly. He saw there might be a remarkable denouement. Then he decided to lead the maid into another channel.

"Did Mrs. Scudd always get along well with the captain?"

"I belief so."
 "You have never known them to quarrel?"

"Nevare."
 "He was always kind to her?"

"Oui."
 "Do you believe Captain Scudd would have any reason for wishing Charley Thornton out of the way?"

"No, monsieur."
 "Have you ever noticed anything peculiar about the captain?"

"He was always vera strange."
 "But was he not uncommonly odd at times?"

"Only once do I remembre zat."
 "How did he appear then?"

"As eef he be asleep when ees wide awake!"
 The detective gave a start.

"How do you mean?"
 "Well, he talk—he walk and all zat, but something eet be strange about heem. I am not able to tell how. Eet is odd. Aftare he do not remembre."

"You never saw him that way but once?"
 "Nevare."

"Do you think he had such spells often?"
 "I cannot tell, monsieur."

"Was he with Mrs. Scudd when he appeared so strangely?"

"No."
 "Where was she?"

"In her chambare."
 "Did he ever oppose her in anything?"

"Nevare for a long time."
 "Then he used to do so?"

"Once or twice he do."
 "What was the result?"

"Madame she have her own way. She look in his eyes and he change hees mind."

"That was strange. I took Captain Scudd for a very obstinate man."

"So he ees."
 "And still she governed him so easily?"

Lizette nodded.
 "I do not understand that," muttered Cal.

"Have you seen her?"
 "Yes."

"Have you looked in her eyes?"
 "Yes."

"They do be black—they do fascinate! I fear them!"

"That is true, her eyes have a strange fascination about them. They are beautiful eyes, but something about them makes me shiver."

The maid shrugged her shoulders.
 "They have a power, monsieur."

"And you believe she exercised that power over her husband?"

"Why not?"
 "Why not, indeed! Carter knew something of hypnotism, and he fancied he began to see a light."

"Look here, Lizette," he said, soberly, "I do not want you to let Mrs. Scudd know you have talked with me."

"Nevare fear."
 "You will not tell her?"

"No."
 "I may want to talk with you again." He placed a piece of money in her hand.

"At any time, monsieur. You have my t'ank. You are vera kind."

With that, he left her.

Carter found himself with much to consider. He surely believed himself on the right track, but how was he to get at the whole truth? He had stood face to face with Mrs. Scudd, and he knew she was a woman who could not be led into a confession of guilt by any ordinary means.

Not that the detective had settled the matter in his own mind. By no means! He was not certain the beautiful woman had any hand in the untimely taking off of Charley Thornton, but he felt that such a thing was far from impossible.

But why should Mrs. Scudd wish the young man dead? That was a difficult question to answer.

Was it possible the beautiful woman was such a fiend at heart that she brought about his death because she had been unsuccessful in her attempted conquest? Cal could hardly believe that of her.

Still, what other motive was there for the commission of so great a crime? Her love had turned to hatred, and "hell bath no fury like a woman scorned."

Then he thought of his conversation with her the day before, and he confessed to himself that—if she had any hand in the crime—she was a woman of wonderful nerve, to say the very least.

But the theory of hypnotism opened a wide field for speculation. It did not take him long to convince himself that Mrs. Scudd was in the habit of thus casting a spell over her husband. She possessed the mesmeric power, and by exercising it she was able to make her husband do exactly as she wished him to do.

Cal knew that it was sometimes possible for one person to mesmerize another even though the two were separated by a considerable distance. Once a "patient" had been brought fully under the control of a mesmerist, it was not difficult to lead that person on from stage to stage till the time came when his mind could be controlled even though miles separated the two.

And Cal believed that was exactly the condition to which John Scudd had been brought by his beautiful wife. It was not necessary for Mrs. Scudd to leave her chamber to throw a spell over the captain. By simply fixing her mind on him she could throw him into a trance from which he would not recover till she permitted. During these hypnotic spells he did things of which he afterward had no recollection.

Had he taken the life of his nephew while in such a trance and under the control of his wife's will?

If so, what was his crime?

CHAPTER XII.

AFTER THE INQUEST.

THE inquest came off that afternoon. Detective Carter was on hand and took many notes. As he had expected, the inquest made things look very black for Captain John Scudd. It really seemed that the old salt had ended the life of his somewhat wayward nephew.

At first Cal was surprised when Mrs. Scudd appeared to give her testimony. She did not appear at all like the almost remarkably steady-nerved woman of the day before. When he first saw her she told him her nerves were all unstrung, but he grew surprised at her apparent self-control. Now she was dissolved in tears and her voice was choked by sobs.

But the detective was shrewd, and he discovered Mrs. Scudd was also crafty. The woman had sized him up as one on whom it would be useless to try shamming in order to make an im-

pression, and she had displayed her wisdom by acting nearly natural. Not so with the coroner's jury. She saw in that body a collection of men whose hearts she believed she could touch with a display of emotion, therefore she was dissolved in tears and carried from the room in what seemed to be a hysterical condition.

Behind the hand that caressed the detective's beardless upper lip was hidden something like a sardonic smile. He believed he understood the woman, and what seemed tragedy to others was comedy to him. But there was one thought that almost appalled the ferret, and as he listened to the almost self-incriminating testimony of Captain Scudd that thought caused him to shudder and grow sick at heart.

Had the beautiful sorceress compelled her husband, while under her baleful influence, to take the life of Charley Thornton? If this was the true solution of the young man's mysterious taking-off, how was he to prove it and save the old salt from the chair of death?

The sensation was a godsend to the reporters, for there happened to be a dearth of such events at about that time, and the readers of the newspapers were almost crying out for a tragic story, even though it was all a fake.

But although the "reporter-detectives" made much ado about the mystery of the young man's death, scarcely one of them considered that mystery deep enough to require special investigation and attention. To the most of them it seemed plain enough that Captain Scudd was the man who had ended Charley Thornton's life. The only thing they seemed inclined to investigate closely was the question of the old salt's sanity.

That was a course that Carter had about dropped, feeling sure the man was perfectly sane at all times. Hypnotic influence, Cal felt sure, had controlled him, if he took young Thornton's life.

But why should Mrs. Scudd wish the young man killed? Was it possible her hatred had become so intense that she had decided on his death? If so, it was also plain she had schemed to so entangle her husband that he would also be "removed." That would leave her a young and beautiful widow of wealth, and she was sure to be much sought and courted. Another marriage with a man nearer her age might give her the happiness she sought.

To himself, Cal repeated again and again that it was a crafty and devilish scheme. Well might the beautiful woman believe there was no danger that she would in any way be connected with the murder, for who would dream that she killed Charley Thornton through the means of her wonderful influence over the enamored old man who was wont to call her his "darling."

But for the fact that she sometimes drank, and had a maid who was wonderfully shrewd, the detective might not have struck the right track at all. But now he was fairly on the trail.

Carter felt that, despite his past record, the solution of this mystery would be a feather in his cap.

Val Sedman was at the inquest, and listened with deep interest. The detective had told him that Shark was again on the trail of Silky Hall, and, for some reason, Val believed that Hall would prove of importance in the case. Cal was not so sure of this after the hypnotic theory took possession of him.

Cal had seen Ollie Field, Charley Thornton's half-sister, and he decided Sedman was a lucky fellow. The girl was a most beautiful creature, although her grief for Charley, whom she had almost idolized, was deep, and had left its traces.

From Val the detective learned Ollie had been taken in by Mrs. Scudd, and made something of a companion. Carter believed the girl was shrewd, and he sought to talk with her after the inquest was over, and the jury had found that "Charles Thornton came to his death by a pistol-bullet fired from a revolver held in the hands of some unknown person." This was of a nature that gave Cal a feeling of relief, for he had expected at one time that the jury would make a charge against Captain Scudd.

"Miss Field," said the detective to Ollie, "Mr. Sedman has informed me that Mrs. Scudd has made something of a companion of you since you came to this house."

The girl bowed.
"It is true, sir."
"She has taken you to her room and is very friendly with you?"

"Yes, sir."
"Well now, Miss Field, I take you for a girl of good sense and I believe you earnestly desire to solve the mystery of your brother's death."

"I do."

"You may be able to aid in the solution of the riddle."

"How! I am ready to do anything—that I can."

"Well, I want you to watch Mrs. Scudd closely and remember as much as possible of what she says and does."

Ollie looked startled.

"Why!" she exclaimed, "is Mrs. Scudd suspected?"

"Every one who was in the house at the time of the murder is under suspicion. Mrs. Scudd may be as innocent as you or I, but some act or word of her's may aid me in getting at the truth. Of course I do not wish her to dream she is being watched, so you will have to exercise some tact."

"Trust me for that."

"I do. I believe you will exercise good judgment. As far as possible, I wish you to watch her, whether she is sleeping or waking. If anything happens that you think might have a bearing on the case, communicate with me without delay. You will do this, I believe?"

"I will."

That was all. He gave her no hint of why the woman was suspected, further than that every one within the house at the time of the crime was under suspicion.

Cal had a brief interview with the old captain, and found him in a pitiful condition. The strain had been heavy upon him, and Dr. Andros had been unable to induce him to swallow an opiate. He was in sad want of sleep, but he was not aware of it. The doctor soberly shook his head behind the captain's back.

"What do you think of it, Carter?" eagerly demanded the old salt. "The inquest has been a failure—I insist it has been a failure! They have discovered nothing now. Egad, sir! from what they brought out it would seem that I was the murderer of my own nephew, sir!"

Then he rolled his eyes, shook his head and wheezed. All the while Dr. Andros was in terror lest his patient be stricken with apoplexy.

"It is a complicated case, sir," admitted the detective.

"Complicated! Well, I should say it was an infernally black one! I'm in a bad light here—I see that, sir. By Neptune! if I had been on that jury and another man in my place, in the face of such evidence as was given to-day I believe I should have advised the arrest of the other man, or done something of that kind. Why, sir, as I listened there, I almost began to believe I really did shoot Charley—my boy! But I couldn't have done that—could I?"

It was an appeal. The man looked to Calvin Carter for an answer, and for one moment the detective hesitated.

"No, captain," he firmly retorted, "you could not be guilty of such a thing."

The old sailor drew a deep breath of relief, and Cal did not add that he did not consider the captain guilty, even though the captain's hand did the deed. If the man was governed by another, then that other was morally responsible for the murder of Charley Thornton.

"I didn't know but the boy took his own life," muttered Captain Scudd, as if speaking to himself; "but the evidence is against it. The position of the body, the revolver and other things go to show he was murdered—murdered in cold blood, sir! You must run down the guilty one, sir! Even if Captain John Scudd were the man, it would be your duty to bring him to the electric chair!"

Without telling the troubled captain that he believed he was on track of the solution, Detective Carter left the house.

There was no word for him at the office, and Shark did not turn up till the following day.

"What's the word?" asked Cal.

"Hall and Moore have had it."

"Who is best?"

"Hall. He gave Moore a stick in the side."

"Bad?"

"Not dangerous."

"Well, where is Hall now?"

"Skipped."

"What do you mean?"

"He has lit out—shaken the dust of New York off his feet."

"The dickens! Which way did he go?"

"To Boston. He gave me the shake," was the rather sheepish confession. "He had dusted before I knew it."

Cal was not pleased, and Shark saw it.

"Look here, boss," said the shadow, "I have Tired Moore rounded up, and I reckon he will blow what he knows, for he swears Hall did not use him right. Now Hall thought Moore was done for, and he has only skipped to wait till it blows over. When he finds the crook is not

badly hurt, he will return to his old stamping ground, and we shall have no trouble in putting our fingers on him. Just now, I say pump Tired Moore."

"The advice is good," acknowledged Cal. "I will follow it."

CHAPTER XIII.

PLAYING THE "PUMP."

So they went to see the wounded tough. They found him in a decidedly "low" locality on the East Side.

"This would be a bad place to be trapped in," muttered Cal as they ascended the dark and unsteady stairs.

"That's so," Shark admitted. "But there is not much danger of being trapped, for we are not expected."

They found Moore stretched on a hard couch in a dingy room. The man's face was pale and he did not look at all ugly just then, but they soon discovered the devil in him was only quelled for the time and was not subdued.

There was a woman in the room, but they did scarcely more than give her a glance. She was dressed in gaudy finery, but her hair had not been touched by a comb that day and there was an air of neglect about her appearance.

At a single look Carter knew her for what she was.

"Hello!" growled Moore, as he looked up at his visitors. "Never mind knockin'—come right in an' make yerselves ter home. I don't have no say round dis place; it b'longs ter any cove as wants ter walk in on me now. Dey don't do it w'en I'm on mer pins dough. See?"

Carter calmly appropriated a rickety chair and sat down near the couch. The wounded tough snarled as he witnessed the cool manner of his visitors.

"Dat's right!" he grated. "Dis place is free ter der public! If youse don't see w'at yer want, ask fer it!"

"Well, it happens we just see what we want," was the detective's quiet retort, as he fixed his eyes on Moore.

The tough started a bit.

"Dat hain't no go!" he huskily retorted.

"Dere hain't no charge 'g'inst me."

"But you are wanted, just the same."

"Fer w'at—fer lettin' dat bloke cut me?"

"For having anything to do with him."

"Well, dat's der worst I ever heard! Say, who be youse?"

"You ought to know me. Take a good look at my face."

Moore did so, then he cried:

"Blowed if 'tain't der sharp w'at played der British blood!"

"Now you have hit it!"

"Well, I s'pose you was after me den?"

"Perhaps so."

"Dashed if you hain't a cool cove!" was Moore's admiring observation. "An' yer did play der English high-an'-mighty in great shape. If I hadn't snatched yer whiskers by accident, we'd never tumbled ter ye."

Carter smiled.

"Well, what did it amount to, anyway?"

"Nothing," confessed the tough. "You was worse dan an eel ter keep a grip on, an' dat's der fact. I'm stuck on your style, an' dat's on der dead level. I never went much on dem detective sharps, 'cause dey alwus had a way of interferin' wid my business, but youse has jest laid me out. I'd go inter der detective business myself if I could have der nerve dat you've got."

"Now you are talking to hear the sound of your own voice," returned Cal, cynically. "You know you don't mean what you say, so what's the use of trying to fool me. I've dealt with your kind before."

Moore made a wry face.

"Well, you be sharp!"

"Will you come off? You are amusing, Moore, but I didn't come here to be entertained."

"No?"

"No. It is a case of business with me."

"Didn't come out of anxiety ter know how I'se gittin' on?"

"Hardly."

"Well, dat's der gall! Ter come inter a feller's house an' tell him dat!"

"It isn't necessary for us to banter, Moore, if you will get it through your head that to banter will be to waste time."

At this the unlucky thief stirred uneasily. His eyes did not meet those of the man at his side.

"Well, w'at yer want?"

"I don't suppose you love Silky Hall?"

"Oh, yes, I do! I love him—he'll find it out

"The time! Dis business hain't settled, boss, an' don't yer fergit dat!"

"What would you do if you knew Hall was playing to get you where you wouldn't bother him any more?"

"But he's taken a skip."

"Perhaps so; perhaps not."

Moore looked startled.

"Der boys said he bad."

"They may be mistaken," said Cal, who believed it was not wrong to mislead such a man as Moore if by so doing an end desired could be reached.

"Well, I reckon dey hain't. Dey hain't often wrong."

"All the same, Hall may have blowed on you."

"W'at could he blow?"

"He says you are a common thief. You are bothering him, and he wants you out of the way."

"Well, I'd like ter know if he's better! He's lived off der greens w'at killed hisself."

"Charley Thornton?"

"Dat's der kid."

"But he denies it."

"Well, he lies!"

"You know this?"

"Course I does!"

"You'll swear to it, even though he tries to heap it on you?"

"On me?"

"Yes."

"Is dat cove tryin' dat?"

"Hot ay."

"Well, he's a skin an' a liar—see? He's der cuss w'at led der young feller ter der devil!"

"And you?"

"I only done some of der pickin'. Hall was at der bottom of it all."

"If you want to clear yourself, I hope you can prove this."

"Prove it? Why, dat sneak can't prove der odder way! I tole him der kid was jest der kind ter blow hisself cold some time w'en he'd gone t'rough wid a big bood'."

"He always had plenty of money?"

"Not alwus, but sometimes he had dead loads. Dat was w'en he'd made a pull."

"A pull?"

"Yes."

"What kind of a pull?"

A sudden suspicion showed in Moore's face, for he began to perceive he was being skillfully "pumped."

"Youse are pretty sharp," he growled; "but I'm on. A pull at der bottle, of course! W'at did yer tink?"

An exclamation of anger would have escaped Cal Carter's lips had he been a less nerry man, for he had overheard himself hot on the trail of a discovery, and almost at the moment of victory he had been thrown.

"That is all right, Moore," came quietly from his lips. "I don't care whether you talk of that or not. Hall has made his charges against you, and you can do as you please about clearing yourself. If your record is as clean as you pretend, it will be for your good to make a straight break. But if the score stands against you, why it is the best to cover your tracks. But the chances are that Hall will be believed."

"Ob, come down! I hain't swallerin' every-ting now! Did you tink I was a Johnnie?"

"I thought you sharp enough to look out for your own interest, that is all."

"Well, w'at's der matter anyhow? Der pidgeon is cooked. Who's raisin' der wind—der old gent?"

"Perhaps so."

"Well, I don't blame him. Der pape's make it out he's in a box, but, den, reporters are big fools. See? Der old bloke never blowed dat boy."

"Perhaps not; perhaps he did."

"Well, he didn't! Dat settles it P. D. Q."

"Other people are not so certain as you."

"Well, dey're fools—dat's w'at's der matter! Der old gent t'ought too much of dat boy. Why, didn't he fork like a prince w'en he had dem spells?"

"Spells?"

"Yes."

"I didn't know he was generous then," said Cal, seeking to lead Moore on. "I thought it was right the other way."

"An' dat's where you're off. He didn't fork w'en he was O. K., but he turned out der stuff w'en he was havin' one of dem spells. Dat is, he did till a while ago, an' den he kinder shifted. Der greens had been hard to der wind fer a whole mont'. Der last bood' der gov' forked didn't pay his debts, an' he'd bin losin' big der day before."

Here, Cal felt, was an explanation that repaid him for his trouble in coming to Tired Moore, for it revealed how Charley Thornton had obtained the money that he had squandered. Captain Scudd had "forked over" while having one of his "spells," and that meant that he had furnished Charley with money while influenced by his wife's wonderful power. Being in love with the young man, the woman had exercised her influence to cause her husband to provide Charley with all the money he desired.

Cal sought to get more out of the wounded tough, but Moore suddenly became sullen and would not talk to the point at all.

"I've chinned too much now," he said. "You fellers may think I'm stuck on workin' me tongue, but you're 'way off. See? I guess yer best git out. Some of der boys is comin' round, an' dey'd make it hot if dey found yer."

"And do you think after I faced a gang of two hundred I'd care for 'some of der boys'?"

"Well, dey hain't no chickens, an' youse wouldn't have a gang ter run like a flock of sheep an' lug yer out. Dat was a slick trick, but it wouldn't work in here, me friend."

"Here come der boys now," calmly observed the woman. "By der sounds, I tink dey're all bringin' dey're jags wid 'em."

Cal and Shark thought so, too. Twenty men seemed stumbling and cursing up the stairs.

Tired Moore half-started up.

"Dey has dey're war-paint on," he chuckled, "an' I bets dey dooes you blokes up."

The sounds were really alarming, but Cal was as cool as usual as he arose to his feet.

"Shark," he said, "if they try to ride us, we will lick the packing out of the lot."

Moore fell back with a gasp, and stared at the nerry detective.

CHAPTER XIV.

HARD MEN TO DOWN.

THEN a heavy foot kicked open the door and a man shambled into the dingy room. He was followed by four others, one of whom was trying to sing a ribald song.

They all halted and peered in astonishment at the detective and his assistant.

"W'at be dey?"

"Git onder der Johnnies!"

"Are dey livin'?"

"Wax-figgers, boys!"

Then the fifth man observed:

"I guess you has got some visitors, pal. Mebbe we hain't in dis?"

"Yes, you is," Moore hastened to say. "Dese blokes came in widout no invite, an' dey makes demselves ter-home like dey owned der town."

At this four of the men growled in chorus, and the fifth one laughed hoarsely.

"Den I guess we's jest in time," observed one.

"Jest about," replied Moore, who was delighted at the prospect of a general row for his entertainment.

"You hain't got no funder use fer dem?"

"No."

The biggest man of the crowd began to take off his coat.

"Where do you fellers want to be buried?" he asked.

"You needn't concern yourself about that," answered Cal. "But before you tackle us you had better make sure your accident policy is all right. It would also be well to call an ambulance before the engagement comes off. That will save us the trouble of calling one for you when it is all over."

This coolness was more than the big fellow had expected, and his under jaw dropped. The possessor of the hoarse laugh pulled the string and sprang it again, appearing really amused this time.

"Ob, youse hain't got no popinjays," warned Moore. "Dis mug is Carter der detective."

All five of the men involuntarily started back toward the door.

"A fly!"

"Dat's w'at," affirmed Moore.

"Here ter pull ye?"

"I dunno."

"Course he is!"

"Well, he's only a private."

"He don't pull no sick man!"

"Wipe him!"

Cal saw they meant to do him harm now, and he knew it was to be a fight against odds. The woman sat looking on with a sort of apathetic interest, as if she did not care whether the men fought or not, which was the truth.

The detective's keen eyes had taken in the whole room, and he saw they must fight their way out by the door through which they had entered. The five ruffians were between them and the door.

"If you fellows are in search of blood, we will try to accommodate you," he calmly observed.

"But after it is all over, it will be a case of 'wish I hadn't' on your part."

"Dat's bluff. We're goin' ter knoek your eye out! See?"

Shark had remained quiet, but he was ready to act when Cal gave the signal. He had been brought up in the streets, and he really enjoyed a fight, but just then he felt as if the prospect was decidedly against them.

"You is goin' ter see some fun, pal," said the big fellow, addressing Tired Moore. "Dis is our day, an' we're on it. We eat dese kind of chickers. Peel, pals."

The other toughs began to take off their coats.

Cal knew the time for action had come. If they waited till the toughs were prepared for the struggle, the odds might be too heavy to surmount, for these men were evidently fighters not to be despised. But they had been drinking freely, and, with the advantage of a sudden assault, the detectives might break through and escape down the dark stairs.

Cal gave a covert signal which Shark alone understood.

Then a surprising thing occurred.

Like a flash, Carter snatched up the old chair and knocked the big fellow down!

Then the two men hurled themselves on the toughs. The chair was used again and broke in a dozen pieces.

Smack, smack, smack! sounded the fists of the two men as they were driven into the faces of the men who were hampered with their half-removed coats.

With a suddenness that was simply wonderful, they cleared a way to the open door.

"Ta, ta, chumpies!" called Shark, as he followed Cal down the stairs.

What howls of pain and fury came from within that room!

"After dem!" howled a voice. "We'll have der street wid us! Don't let 'em git away!"

So the five ruffians came tumbling down the stairs in pursuit of the man who had so easily worsted them all.

Cal knew the danger was not over by any means, for the locality was a bad one, and the toughs of the street would join in the chase. Weapons of a deadly nature might be used.

But the detective's eyes were wide open, and never yet had he been caught in a trap from which he could not find any way of escape.

As he sprang out of the door and reached the narrow sidewalk a dray happened to be passing.

"Onto this!" he cried: and Shark followed him.

Together they leaped upon the dray, and the driver was amazed when Cal snatched the reins and whip from his hands and lashed the horse into a wild gallop.

"What in blue blazes you doin'?" snarled the driver, and he would have tried to recover control of his cart had it not been for Shark, who grasped him around the body from behind. Both men fell struggling to the bottom of the cart.

For a short distance the toughs pursued along the street, but they were forced to give up the chase and confess themselves outwitted and beaten.

A policeman made a most unexpected appearance and tried to stop the cart, but Carter did not wish to make any explanations then, so the officer failed in his purpose.

At the corner Cal drew up somewhat and Shark released his hold on the driver. Then the two daring men leaped from the dray before a crowd could collect and disappeared beyond the swinging doors of a saloon that was on the corner.

As Cal had suspected, the saloon had another entrance that was on an alley-like street, and by this they left it, thus easily throwing those who might bother them with questions they did not care to answer.

They took the first horse-car they came to, and when he was fairly seated within it, Shark gave vent to his mirth, laughing heartily over their adventure.

"We can afford to laugh now," said Cal, "but the laugh might have been on the other side. We were certainly in a bad scrape."

"Yes, but they were played in great shape. They will not forget that very soon."

"I guess not, and I got a point from Moore. Now I know how the young fellow got so much money to squander. I do not fancy Moore knows anything of real importance against Silky Hall—anything that would criminate the gambler—although he may."

They were alone in the car, so they could freely discuss the adventure.

Back to the office they went, and there Cal

laid out some new plans. His first move was to have another brief talk with Captain Scudd, during the course of which he asked:

"Did you always allow Charley Thornton all the money he wanted?"

"No, sir—no!" was the instant reply. "Not always."

"Are you aware that up to a short time ago he has ever been supplied with plenty of money?"

"It was always my intention to keep him supplied with all the money he needed, sir," retorted the captain, and Cal fancied he sought to avoid the question.

"But he had more than he needed. He 'blew in' large sums. He bet on the races."

Captain Scudd said nothing.

"This money came from somewhere," continued Cal. "He was never very fortunate at the gaming-table."

"At the gaming-table? Sir, do you mean to insinuate my nephew was a gambler?"

"No, he was not a gambler—he was a pigeon for the gamblers to pluck."

"Perhaps he occasionally indulged in a social game with some particular friends. Cards, sir, are very fascinating, sir. I sometimes take a hand in a friendly game of draw."

"You are a man of mature judgment; your nephew was a youth with hot blood in his veins. You can do things that would not be advisable for a young man."

"I flatter myself, sir, I have a very good control over myself. I know the limit."

"Well, that is more than most young men know. But we have drifted from the question. How did he obtain so much money?"

The captain hesitated, looked around the room, then drew his chair nearer the detective.

"I have a confession to make," he said, in a low tone. "I suppose I must have given him whatever he had, though I did so during my spells of absent-mindedness, for I am sometimes troubled with such spells. I have a little safe where I keep a certain amount of ready cash on hand, and I drew on that sum several times. I suppose he bothered me, and I did it to get rid of him. Yes, sir, yes—that must be the explanation. It was folly on my part—I know it, sir. Don't speak of that. I hardly knew when I gave him the money, but I afterward found it gone."

"And you never suspected him of appropriating anything without your knowledge?"

Captain Scudd's face grew crimson, and he lifted his somewhat unwieldy body from the chair.

"Sir," he gurgled, as he stood before the detective, "do you mean to insult the memory of my dead nephew? He was the soul of honor, sir! Egad! I tell you I gave him the money! That settles it, sir!"

And it did.

Cal pacified the indignant captain and departed from the house, more than ever realizing how wonderful was the mysterious power with which the beautiful Mrs. Scudd ruled the man who was utterly unconscious of her control over his thoughts and actions.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SUSPENDED SWORD.

THE funeral of Charley Thornton took place and three days went by.

Then came the arrest of Captain Scudd!

He was charged with the murder!

Although he knew such a thing was impending, the arrest occurred at a moment when it was least expected by Detective Carter.

The captain was committed, and Cal visited him in his cell. He found the old salt in a state of utter despondency and despair.

"I am very sorry, captain, that anything so regrettable—"

The unfortunate man checked him with a gesture.

"It had to come," he said, huskily. "I knew it must come. I wondered why they did not arrest me before. It looks mighty black for an old man like me!"

"But you are innocent—"

"Am I?"

The question startled Cal. He looked sharply at the captain to see if he really intended it for a question or an exclamation. The old sailor saw that look, and he slowly said:

"Perhaps you may think me innocent, but I am not so sure of that."

Cal made sure no one was listening. The matter had not come to such a stage that the guard was obliged to remain in the cell with visitors, and the detective decided they could converse guardedly with no danger of being overheard.

"Look here, captain," he said, "just what do you mean by that?"

But the old salt only shook his head.

"Are you allowing me to work in the dark when you might aid me by a few words?" asked Cal, reproachfully. "What do you mean by saying you are not sure of your own innocence? We are alone and will not be overheard, so you can speak out. Is there anything you have concealed from me?"

"Intentionally I have concealed nothing, sir; but you know I have been unable to give an account of what occurred between the time I started to leave the room after my nephew declared he thought himself drugged and the moment when my wife rapped at the door. What did I do during that time?"

Captain Scudd looked helplessly at the detective.

"Captain," said Cal, gravely, "I have a hope of discovering exactly what you did while you were in that room with your nephew."

"If you only can— But how?"

"I believe there is a way."

"You do not think I am deceiving you—you do not think I am lying about this?"

"I believe you are telling the truth."

"Thank God for that!"

"The case certainly is a strange one; but there must be some way to solve the mystery."

"I have a terrible fear." The captain lowered his voice still more and gazed at Cal with eyes in the depths of which there was something like a haunting dread.

"What do you fear?"

"The very thing I long to know—the truth!"

"Why?"

"Because it seems so black against me now. If I was alone with poor Charley all that time and he lay in a drugged and unconscious condition on that couch, who but I could have taken his life?"

"Why should you do such a thing?"

"God only knows!"

"Do you still deny that the revolver found on the floor is yours?"

"Certainly I do. I never saw the weapon before my wife pointed to it."

"But your own weapon is missing from your desk."

"I know."

"What can have become of it?"

"I cannot tell. It is a mystery to me—as much as to you. You do not seem to be making much progress on this matter. Are you baffled? If so, say so, like a man."

To this the detective calmly replied:

"Everything cannot be accomplished in such a very brief space of time. Rome was not built in a day, you know. I will tell you now I am making progress. If you knew all I have discovered your astonishment would be boundless. — Captain, though I do not know who fired the shot, I know exactly who the real murderer is!"

Captain Scudd caught his breath and stared at Detective Carter in a state of absolutely speechless wonderment. To him the statement he had just heard was utterly paradoxical. How could any one know who the real murderer was and not know who fired the shot?

Although he did not betray it, the detective was not a little amused by the astonishment of the old sailor. He fully appreciated the captain's wonder.

"It is true," he affirmed, nodding his head. "But although it is true, I am not ready to convince the world of its truth. First I must be certain who fired the shot."

"But wh-wh-what can you mean?" faltered the dumfounded captain.

"Just what I said, captain—no more, no less."

"But such a thing is utterly impossible!"

"It may seem so, but it is not."

It was some little time before the captain recovered sufficiently to carry on the conversation.

Suddenly, Cal turned on him with:

"Captain Scudd, this has been a severe blow for your wife."

"That is true, sir—that is true. Poor Milly! She really thought a great deal of Charley. They always got along very well together. They used to sing together and talk of books and horses and dogs and all that infernal nonsense."

"There was never any trouble between them?"

"Trouble? No, sir—not to my knowledge, sir."

"Have they been as good friends of late as they were a while ago?"

"Well, I guess so. I don't know," speaking slowly. "They have not been so much together perhaps, but I think they have remained just as good friends."

"You are certain your wife did not dislike the

young man? He had given her no reasons hate him?"

"Oh, no, no! Charley was not a boy to offend a lady! I am sure there was no trouble between them. But what makes you ask such questions? Surely, sir, you—"

He stopped, gazing sharply into Cal's face; then he suddenly cried:

"If that is the line you are working on, sir, you may as well drop the whole matter! You are simply wasting your time and robbing me of the money I am forced to pay you!"

"You are inclined to jump at a conclusion too quickly, captain."

"Then I am mistaken—you are not working from that standpoint, sir?"

"I am working to get at the truth, and I have not lied in telling you I know the real murderer. You must trust me, captain."

Cal decided it could be of no advantage to talk longer with the captain, so, after cautioning him against talking in a way that would give anyone the belief that he thought himself guilty, he left him, passing the old sailor's lawyer in going out.

From thence he went directly to Captain Scudd's home. He wished to have a talk with Ollie.

There was a flush of excitement on the girl's face as she appeared before him.

"Oh, I am so glad you have come!" she softly cried. "Look at this!"

And from a place of concealment she produced and held up a large revolver.

"Hallo!" exclaimed the detective. "Where did you get that?"

"In Mrs. Scudd's room."

"Ah! Let me see it."

Carter examined the weapon.

"Rather heavy for a lady," he commented, speaking more to himself than his companion. "I do not find any marks upon it. Where was it kept?"

"It was hidden beneath her dressing-case."

"So-so! How did you discover where it was?"

"Mrs. Scudd talked in her sleep. She has a nap every afternoon, especially if she happens to rise uncommonly early. To-day she muttered something about the revolver under the dressing-case. I found a chance to investigate, and this is what I discovered."

As he looked the weapon over, Carter decided it was the one that was missing from Captain Scudd's desk. Why was the weapon in Mrs. Scudd's room? His mind ran over a possible solution.

Charley Thornton had been murdered with another weapon, but the one who did the deed wished it thought he was killed with the captain's own revolver. It would not do to fire a second shot and so empty a chamber in the loaded revolver, for there was a possibility of arousing the house. Besides that, the bullet must lodge somewhere, and a keen-eyed ferret might discover where. That would show two shots had been fired, but the revolver would only have one empty chamber.

If the revolver with which the murder was actually committed was left and the captain's weapon removed, it might be that the captain's assertion concerning his not owning the fatal weapon would be disbelieved. It might seem like a shallow trick to get out of the trap into which he had fallen.

This seemed fairly reasonable.

Cal examined the weapon till he was certain he could describe it accurately, and then he had Ollie do the same.

"Now I want you to return it to the spot from whence you took it," he said. "I think it might prove of some importance, but rather than alarm my lady by its removal, I will run the risk of her finding a way to get rid of it. She must not be alarmed now."

So the revolver was restored, and the beautiful sorceress remained unconscious of the sword suspended over her by a single hair.

CHAPTER XVI.

PICKING UP NEW POINTS.

CLEAR-GRIT CAL did not leave the house without having a talk with Lizette, the French maid, and that talk was of immense import in the solution of the mystery.

"Lizette," he said, "does Mrs. Scudd ever have visitors whose presence in the house is not known to her husband?"

"Oui, monsieur—one."

"Hal! Who?"

"Her brozare."

"Her brother?"

Lizette nodded.

"Well, why does she receive him without the captain's knowledge?"

"Zay do have some trouble when first she mar-ree ze captaine. He do not like her brozare, and he do forbid him to come at all."

"Ah-hal I see. How often did this brother visit Mrs. Scudd?"

"Not vera oftun."

"Where did she receive him?"

"In her room."

"So? And the captain never suspected?"

"No."

"How did he enter the house?"

"By ze back way, monsieur."

"This grows interesting. The cook must be in the secret."

"Oui, she ees."

"By Jove! I wonder just how important this matter is! It may have some bearing on the case, or it may not."

"I did not t'ink of eet, or I tell you before, monsieur."

It will be necessary for me to find out about this brother," thought Cal. "It is strange he should not demand his rights. It is not manly to come sneaking into another man's house, even though it is to see a sister."

In one thing Cal had been somewhat baffled. That was in tracing the past life of Mrs. Scudd. He had followed her back to a certain point, but previous to that he could not learn anything about her. The captain had fallen in love with her, and she had married him on condition that he did not question her concerning the past, which she declared had been "very sad." Being perfectly enamored, the captain had consented to the condition.

Now, Carter had come to believe that the beautiful woman had the best of reasons for wishing her past career kept shady. He believed the captain would not have married her had he known the truth concerning that past.

But if Mrs. Scudd had lived a criminal life, she had not been "placed on record" in this country. Cal knew she might be English, but he was inclined to think her an American. He also knew she might have been in some way connected with criminals, and still escaped police attention.

He now saw a chance to get at the truth of her past, and that was through the brother who secretly visited her in her beautiful home. He felt sure that brother would prove a criminal of some sort.

"When was he here last?" asked the detective.

"Oh, eet was some week ago."

"One week ago?"

"No, no! One, two, tree—a mont'."

"So long?"

"Oui."

"He visited Mrs. Scudd in her room then?"

Lizette nodded.

"Is there any one besides yourself and the cook in the secret?"

"There was, monsieur."

"Was?"

"Oui."

"Just what do you mean by that? If there was, is there not now?"

"No."

"How is that?"

"Ze ozare one he be dead."

"Charley Thornton?"

"Zat be ze one."

"Great Scott!"

Again was new light brought to the detective. He found himself standing face to face with new possibilities. Of a sudden, he began to feel that he was not so sure he knew exactly who the "real murderer" was.

"Did Charley Thornton allow this, and not report to his uncle?"

"Oui."

"Well, I think less of the young man than I did."

"Zis brozare do have some talk with Charles sometime."

"In this house?"

"One time here."

"And the fool boy didn't know he was playing with fire!" muttered Cal.

He began to feel disgusted with Charley Thornton.

"You did not hear what they said, Lizette?"

"I do just hear ze word monee."

"Money?"

Lizette bowed.

"Zat was eet."

"Well this grows still more interesting! Why should they be speaking of money? Christopher! Was Charley Thornton in league with this brother in fleeing the captain? It begins to look that way!"

If that was true, there might have been another reason than hatred for the young man's murder. It did not seem so very much as if Mrs. Scudd had killed him: out of madness because he had repulsed her when she tried to win his love. Instead of that, Thornton might have fallen into a repentant mood and threatened to tell his uncle all. Then it would have been necessary to silence him in order for the beautiful Mrs. Scudd not to suffer a terrible downfall. The sharks saw themselves in danger and they resorted to a deadly and terrible method of retaining their grip on their prey.

And still, was Captain Scudd the one who had fired the fatal shot? Had the wicked woman exercised her influence to compel him to take the life of his own nephew?

Those questions were still unanswerable, but Carter fancied he saw a ray of hope for the unfortunate man.

But how it would crush and humiliate the old salt when he knew the whole horrible truth! It would be a terrible blow when he was forced to believe his charming wife guilty of conspiracy against him. And he might have to believe her guilty of murder!

"Lizette, I must see the cook."

Down to the kitchen went the detective, and there he found the cook was a buxom Irish girl with a face that was far from being uncomely and a brogue that would "give her away" under any circumstances.

It was not such an easy thing to induce Mollie to talk about her mistress and the family secrets, but Carter was skilled in the art of questioning, and he finally caused her to believe it her duty to tell all she knew, in order to help clear up the mystery of the murder.

Charley had been a favorite in the kitchen, as well as everywhere else.

"Och, hone! th' poor lard! niver will this hoouse say the loikes av him again!" And Mollie wiped her eyes with her apron.

"Now, Mollie," said Cal, in his most persuading manner, "you can aid me in clearing up this mystery, if you will. Your master is in jail, and it is your duty to help me in getting him out."

"Arrah, but th' mistress hiv cautioned me to soay niver a worrud."

"About what?"

"About thot blackguard av a broother av hers, sur. It's divil a bit do Oi loike the looks av him! He's a schoundril, av Oi hiv a bit av brains in me hid!"

"You are right, Mollie. You Irish are always right."

"By me faith! yure th' firrust Yarnkee Oi ivver hurrd soay th' loikes av thot? It's directly th' opposite they do be afther tarkin'. They roon us doown to th' larrust notch, an' soay whoy didn't we stay in Auld Oireland. Th' S'int's know we'd bin glad enough to staid theer av Johnnie Bull didn't sit hissif over us wid a whip in his harrud! It's not this wretched country we do be afther warntin' av we kin hiv th' Auld Sod to be our own!"

Cal saw Mollie was flying off at a tangent, and he made haste to bring her back.

"My sympathy is with the Irish," he assured. "When I take it into my head to get married, I'll search around for a Yankee girl with Irish blood in her veins. Mollie, I'm keeping track of you from this on."

"But I am with you in thinking this brother of Mrs. Scudd a bad piece of property."

"Hivven knows Oi'd not loike him on me hands!"

"He comes in by the kitchen?"

"He do thot, an' Oi hiv had th' pleasure av tellin' him what Oi do think av him for thot sn'akin' way."

"Does he come often?"

"Not very; he doon't dare."

"You let him in?"

"Whin Oi am toold. Oi'd niver do thot, but Masther Charley said it wur all roight. Poor Masther Charley!"

"Well, his death begins to make it look as if it was not all right, Mollie."

"Oi niver could see how he could hiv anything to do wid th' loikes av thot black-faced odamahoon."

"Then this brother is dark-faced?"

"Yis, sur."

"With a black mustache?"

"Yis, sur."

"Tall?"

"He is, sur."

"Always well-dressed?"

"Loike a dandy, sur."

"I know him!" thought Cal. Aloud, he said:

"When was he here last?"

"Th' very day poor Charley wur kilt, sur."

An exclamation of satisfaction came from Cal Carter's lips. This was growing interesting, to say the very least.

"You let him in, Mollie?"

"Yis, sur. He samed a bit flustered loike an' said he must have a worrud wid his sister. It wur a mighty long wurrud he spokel!"

"How long was he with her?"

"A coople av hours, sur."

"You let him out?"

"Yis, sur."

"How did he appear then?"

"Cool as oice. He did be afther givin' me some money."

"Hal! A bribe?"

"No; a foive dollar bill, sur."

"So much? And he asked you to keep mum?"

"He did thot."

"You and Mrs. Scudd are probably the only ones who know of his visit on that day?"

"Barrin' yerself, sur."

"Well, I am in it to stay. Mollie, as you love your life—as you loved your young master who was murdered, don't let a soul know you have told me these things."

"There is little danger av thot, sur. Oi hiv no desire to lose me place here."

"Well, here is another five to match the one the dark-faced brother gave you."

A few minutes later the detective was on the street, and he walked with a swinging, springy step.

"The next thing in order," he softly muttered, "is to close my fingers on Silky Hall. I wonder if I will have to follow him to Boston?"

But he was saved the trouble. Hall had learned Tired Moore was not "done up," and the dark-faced gambler was back in New York.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE REVELATION.

SHARK gladdened the heart of his employer by informing him that Hall had returned.

"How do you know this?" asked Cal.

"An old street friend of mine who knows the sport put me on."

"Well, I shall need Hall directly. I have got some new points, and he is in it—deep."

"So?"

"Yes. I want to hunt him up."

"All right."

"I shall arrest him shortly."

"For what?"

"Well, I will have a charge that is stiff enough to stand alone. I tell you, Shark, that man needs electricity to brace him up—and he is liable to get a heavy shock."

"Is it bad as that?"

"It looks that way from the road."

"Then I'm onto him."

"Stick by him, but don't let him tumble. He must not be alarmed."

"How soon will you be ready to gather him?"

"By to-morrow, I expect."

Cal had a theory, but he was not sure it could be worked out. From his office he sought a certain practitioner of hypnotism and had a long talk with him. When this talk was over it was too late to carry out his plan that day.

At an early hour the next day Cal visited Captain Scudd in his cell. With the detective came three other men. One was the professor of hypnotism, one was a certain police official high in office, and the third was a well-known citizen of great influence.

The captain was surprised when he saw them all enter his cell.

"Captain Scudd," said Cal, after he had made his companions known to the unfortunate man, "I know you are astonished by our appearance here, but we have come for a purpose."

"What purpose?"

"The purpose of making an attempt to fully unfold the mystery of Charlie Thornton's death."

"Egad, sir! you do not mean to infer that I can tell you anything more than I have already made known?"

"Oh, yes I do!"

The captain lifted his weighty body, his face becoming almost purple with anger.

"Sir, this is more than I can stand! You plainly express doubts as to my veracity! I have told you everything I know, as I have before assured you, but you have now come with the evident purpose of intimidating me into something like a confession. Sir, I discharge you, and I refuse to have anything further to say to you. You will find there is a limit!"

It was with difficulty Cal calmed the excited man in a measure, hastening to explain:

"I have no thought of inferring you could have told more up to the present time, captain;

but I think it is possible you can be assisted in remembering. It is the furthest thing from my thoughts to try to intimidate you into a confession."

Captain Scudd looked at Cal in silence, and the detective added:

"If you will trust me, captain, I think I shall be able to get at the whole truth but you must consent to an experiment."

"What experiment, sir?"

"Sit down, and I will explain."

The captain sat down, but seemed to hold himself on guard.

"Now you remember, captain, that you have been troubled with spells of forgetfulness."

The old sailor grunted.

"That," continued Cal, "is why you are not able to tell what occurred the day Charley Thornton was killed. Now, I believe I know the exact cause of your forgetfulness."

"What is it?"

"I think it is hypnotism."

"Hypnotism? Impossible, sir!"

"It may seem so, but I fancy it not impossible. I believe you were hypnotized at the time Charley Thornton was killed and that is why you are unable to tell what took place."

The captain was inclined to turn up his nose at this, but Cal did his best to convince him of its possibility.

"I trust you will not refuse to allow the experiment, for it is all for your good."

"But who could have hypnotized me at that time?"

"There is such a thing as self-hypnotism."

"Bosh! All infernal nonsense!"

"You may think so, but until this experiment proves a failure you cannot be certain."

"These gentlemen have come here to witness this fool business, have they?"

"The professor has come for the purpose of attempting to bring you under his influence."

The captain braced up stiffly.

"I defy him to! I have a will of my own, as you will discover. I am not a man to be easily controlled by others."

"If you wish to combat me, sir," smoothly observed the professor, "you may be able to resist my power. I do not dispute that. If I had once obtained control of you, you would not be able to resist the second time, but as you are a new subject, you might make it difficult or impossible for me to throw you into a hypnotic trance. If you are inclined to give me your assistance by surrendering yourself to the experiment and not attempting to combat me, I may be successful."

"If you were in a hypnotic trance when your nephew was killed, you will be able to tell what occurred then."

The captain reflected a little while, then said:

"Well, go ahead. It can't do any harm that I can see, but I'm sure it won't do any good."

Having received the captain's consent, the professor seated him in a favorable position on the edge of his bed, requested him to think about nothing in particular, and then set about the work of throwing him into a trance.

The spectators looked on with bated breath, Cal being in fear lest the experiment prove a failure. The professor continued to make his passes for some time without producing any visible result on the captain, but at length the old sailor's eyes began to close. A look of satisfaction rested on the hypnotizer's face.

"Captain?"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Why have you closed your eyes?"

"I have not, sir; they are wide open."

"You are mistaken; they are closed. Open them!"

Captain Scudd's eyes opened, and the man sat there before them, apparently in his natural state.

"Captain, you can't get up if you try."

And he could not! He struggled to arise, but it was useless.

The spectators looked at each other in astonishment.

Cal whipped out his book and was ready to take down anything of importance that fell from Captain Scudd's lips.

"Now, sir," said the professor, "I want you to think of the thirteenth day of the present month. I want you to tell me what occurred on the afternoon of that day."

"I was in my private room."

"Any one with you?"

"My nephew lay on a couch."

"Awake or sleeping?"

"He seemed to be sleeping."

"Go on, sir."

"After a time my door was opened."

"By whom?"

"My wife."

"The door was not locked?"

"It was not."

"Did your wife enter the room?"

"She did. There was another person who entered."

"Another? Who?"

"Her brother."

The detective caught his breath. The revelation was coming!

"What did they do?"

"My wife closed the door and locked it."

"And then?"

"They spoke together in low tones. I did not hear what they said."

"What followed?"

"My wife's brother came over and looked into my face. Then he asked her to prove something. She told me to stand on my head in the middle of the floor!"

"You did so?"

"I did."

"Then what?"

"He said he was satisfied, but that the only way to keep the secret was to kill either me or my nephew. He was excited and so was she. She pleaded with him. I think he had been drinking. He broke from her and suddenly took a revolver from his pocket. Then he went close to where Charley lay sleeping, and—"

Captain Scott paused and caught his breath with a hoarse gasp.

It was still as death in that cell. Every man seemed listening with hushed heart and stilled breath to the wonderful revelation of the hypnotized man.

"What did he do?"

"He placed the muzzle of the weapon against Charley's head and fired!"

A deep breath that was almost a groan came from four pairs of lips.

"What followed?" asked the professor, quickly regaining his composure.

"He dropped the revolver and stepped back. Then they listened to see if the shot had been heard. It had not, for sounds within that room are seldom heard outside."

"How did all this affect you?"

"It did not seem to affect me at all. I believe I thought I was dreaming."

"What did this man and woman then do?"

"They talked together in whispers. I did not hear all they said, but I did hear my wife say it must be made to seem that I killed Charley. Then she unlocked my desk and took out my revolver. They talked some more, and seemed to arrive at a decision."

"And then—what?"

"They left the revolver with which Charley was shot where it had fallen on the floor. But they took my revolver when they went out of the room."

"What did you do after they were gone?"

"Nothing."

"Are you sure?"

"I locked the door; that is all."

"You locked the door behind them?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then you did what?"

"Nothing but sit in my chair."

"How long did you sit there?"

"Till I heard some one knocking."

"What happened then?"

"I do not know."

"You cannot remember?"

"No."

The professor turned to his companions.

"It was at that moment that he came out of his trance," he explained. "He has told us all."

A short time later Captain Scudd was in his natural state of mind.

"Well," he said, "how did your great scheme work?"

"Completely, captain!" cried Cal, triumphantly. "I now know who fired that shot, and I will have you out of here mighty soon."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE WHOLE TRUTH.

"THE deuce is to pay! One of Tired Moore's pals has shot Silky Hall, and the sport has got it for good. He is in Jerry Riley's dive on the Bowery. Come lively, if you want to squeeze him before he croaks."

SHARK.

Such was the startling message thrust into Cal Carter's hand as he was leaving the jail.

He lost no time in getting to Jerry Riley's, but he arrived too late.

Silky Hall was dead!

Cal's dismay was great.

"Too bad!" he exclaimed. "Now I must depend on that woman fiend. From her lips I must learn the truth."

"If you learn anything from her, you will have to move lively," declared Shark. "I believe Hall succeeded in sending her word he was cooked."

"Then you are right. She must be nipped before she tries to skip."

Cal was not a man to waste time. With Shark and two policemen he appeared at the door of Captain Scudd's house a short time later. They were admitted and informed that Mrs. Scudd was in her room. Cal asked if any one had called to see her and was told there had.

Making sure she could not get out without being seen, Cal sent up his card.

The servant soon returned, stating no reply could be obtained.

Then Cal and a policeman went up to the door. The policeman held a warrant for Mrs. Scudd's arrest.

They rapped on the door and called to the woman, but there came no reply. Ollie Field appeared and stated that Mrs. Scudd had returned after seeing the man who called, and was in a condition of excitement that was frightful to witness. She drove Ollie from the room, locking herself in.

Seeing there was no other way of obtaining immediate entrance, the policeman burst open the door.

The woman plotter was within the room, but she lay dead on her dainty bed, an empty vial grasped in the fingers that were not yet cold.

She was also beyond the reach of the law.

In life she had been beautiful—death had not robbed her of her beauty.

On a little table stood an open bottle of ink, into which a pen was thrust. On a sheet of paper close by was the written confession of the dead woman.

It was all Cal Carter desired! It told the story of the murder as it was told by the entranced captain, and it also told one thing suspected by no one.

Silky Hall was not her brother! *He was her rightful husband!*

At first Charley Thornton had believed Hall the woman's brother, but on the day of the murder, in some manner, he had learned the truth.

Then he swore he would expose the whole business, and that threat brought about his death. Hall found the young man could not be silenced, and so he saw ruin staring him in the face. He had induced a friend to get some drugged liquor into Charley.

Meantime, Hall had made all haste to communicate with his wife, who was plucking the man who believed himself her husband. The gambler had hastened to the woman and told her of their peril. She was appalled, but she saw a way to avert it for a time. She had practiced hypnotism on Captain Scudd till she was able to bring him under her influence even though she was not with him.

Then the wretched man and woman saw a carriage draw up at the steps and Charley Thornton leave it for the house.

Not an instant was to be lost.

The sorceress set about bringing Captain Scudd under her influence. She succeeded, and then, unseen by any one, Hall and his wife descended to the captain's room.

Then took place exactly what Captain Scudd revealed in his cell.

The woman had tried to have Charley Thornton's life spared, for she was really fascinated by the rather gay youth, but her husband knew mercy meant exposure and exposure meant disaster, so he was relentless.

Thus was the mystery of Charley Thornton's death cleared up to the satisfaction of the most skeptical.

Only a word more.

The reader must imagine the effect of this revelation on Captain Scudd. It did not cause the death of the old salt, as Dr. Andros feared it would; but it crushed him so he was never after like his former self. He never completed the wonderful invention, on which he had labored so long, for he had no further ambition.

The captain needed the companionship of some one, and Ollie filled her brother's place in such a way that he would not let her leave him when she became Mrs. Val Sedman.

So Val made his home there, and when the captain died, Ollie inherited all his property.

Of course Clear-Grit Cal was liberally rewarded, and the story of his discernment and the experiment by which the truth was discovered before the death of the adventuress was told by all the papers.

It was simply one of his *many* shrewd bits of detective work.

THE END.

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